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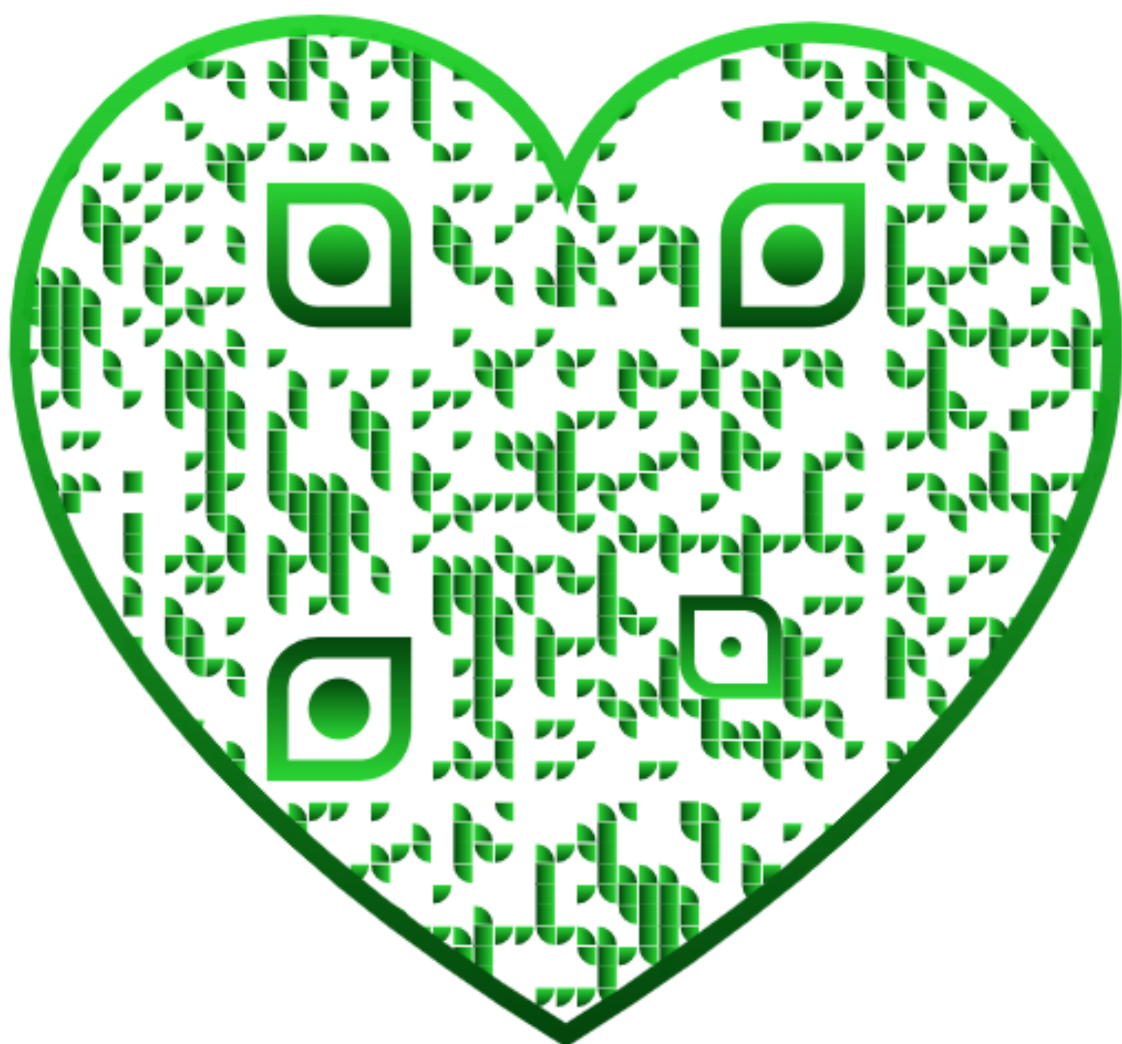
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ISSUE 249





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26 Deep Purple

With their sprawling family tree, they shaped the sound and look of the golden age of classic rock more than any other. Across 25 pages, with contributions from band members past and present, we chart Purple's reign. Including...

32 Dio & Rainbow

Ritchie leaving Purple led to one of their greatest offshoots, and brought to our attention one of rock's greatest singers.

36 Coverdale & Whitesnake

Pissed off with Purple, Coverdale jumped ship and went solo. Eventually he formed a band, giving birth to a monster.

38 Ian Gillan

Post-Purple, he scored some hits with his self-named bands, but it became clear that the game was over when he was tackled by a football legend.

40 The Butterfly Ball

How a Roger Glover soundtrack album became a live extravaganza starring Twiggy and Vincent Price.

42 Trapeze

Fronted by the future Voice Of Rock, major success looked inevitable. But then Deep Purple came calling...

44 Roger Glover

A parallel career as producer meant that branches of Purple spread out to include Elf, Nazareth, Judas Priest and more.

48 Don Airey

The well-travelled keyboard player is enjoying being part of the longest unbroken line-up Deep Purple have ever had.

52 Ian Paice

The only original member of Purple in the current line-up talks early days, departures, splits, reunions, Blackmore and keeping the Purple ship afloat.

56 PFM

Not many Italian bands cracked the US. Meet Premiata Forneria Marconi, one of the great trailblazers of European prog rock.

60 Wishbone Ash

They conquered both sides of the Atlantic and charted with some classics. The band's members recall the highs, and reflect on where it all went wrong.

68 The Damned

The punk icons have returned with a commanding new album. But there's a lot more to The Damned than you might think...

72 Black Stone Cherry

The Beatles to Bizkit, Sabbath to gospel... BSC share the ingredients that spice up their southern-fried sounds.

76 Michael Schenker

The guitar hero hired and fired singers with abandon. So what made them all come back on board for an album and tour? The vocalists tell their stories.

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The Damned

"I don't know what to do with myself at home. I do really boring stuff like train spotting."



60

Wishbone Ash

"We came from a golden age."

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Sambora and Such rejoin *Bon Jovi* at Hall Of Fame... *Lindsey Buckingham* out of *Fleetwood Mac*, *Tyler* and *Daltrey* go their own way... Say hello to *Kip Moore* and *Palace Of The King*, welcome back *Melvins* and *The Sheepdogs*, say goodbye to *Mike Harrison*, *Mars Cowling*, *Martin Cockerham*...

20 The Stories Behind The Songs

Uriah Heep

A song dashed off in 10 minutes, *Easy Livin'* broke the band in the US and propelled them into rock's big league.

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Dizzy Reed

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130 Heavy Load

Nils Lofgren

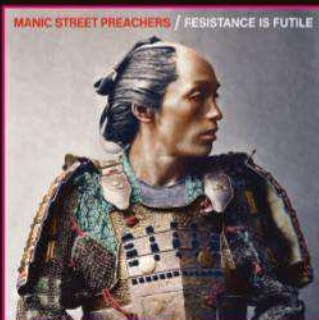
The veteran sideman guitarist and solo artist on back-flips, culinary skills, crying, sugar and more sugar.



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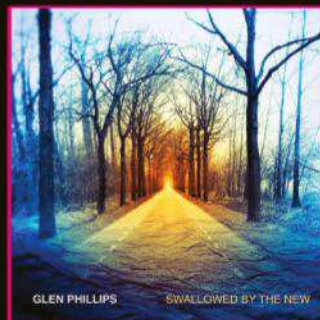
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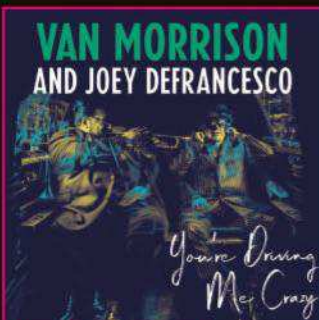
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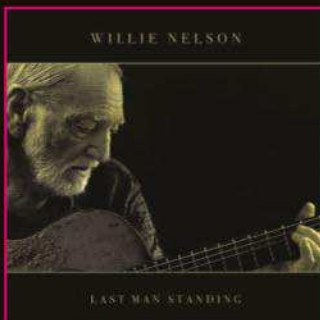
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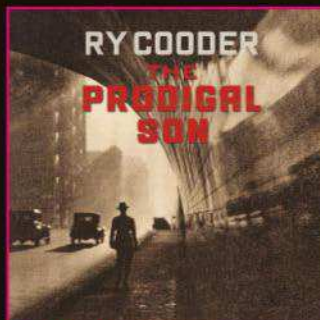
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Swallowed By The New
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Toad The Wet Sprocket's Glen's latest release is an intensely personal album and reflects Glen's mastery for converting raw emotion into sound.



Van Morrison and Joey DeFrancesco
You're Driving Me Crazy
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Last Man Standing
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Last Man Standing finds Willie rolling at a creative peak, writing, singing and playing with the seasoned wit and wisdom that comes from the road.



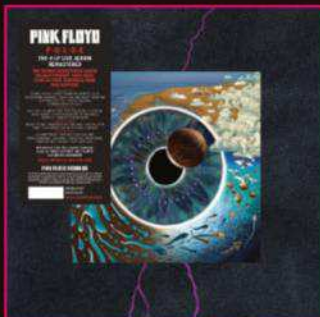
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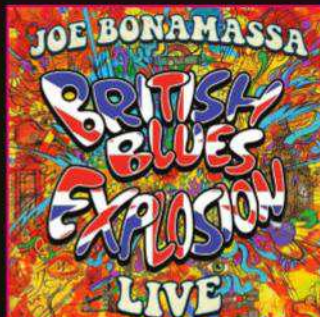
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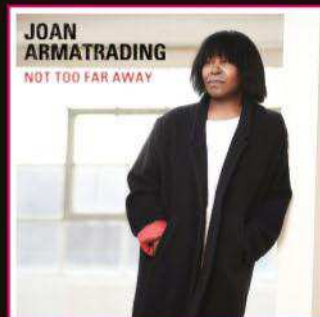
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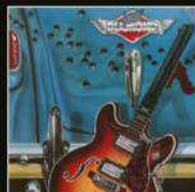
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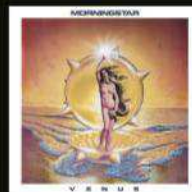
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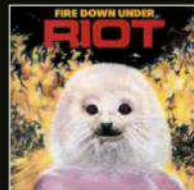
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NUTZ - 'NUTZ TOO...'



STONE FURY - 'BURNS LIKE A STAR'



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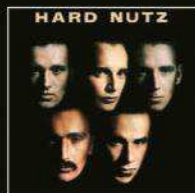


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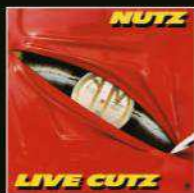


BAD ENGLISH - 'S/T'

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NUTZ - 'HARD NUTZ'



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SO WHAT'S INSIDE ISSUE 6?

VAN HALEN - INSIDE ROCK'S
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CINDERELLA - THE REAL STORY
BY TOM KEIFER

JUDAS PRIEST - THE STORY BEHIND
'SCREAMING FOR VENGEANCE'

DEEP PURPLE - THE END OF MK IV

RAIT' - CAUGHT IN A TRAP

DIO - HOLY DIVER REAPPRAISED

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Have you ever watched that BBC quiz show called *Only Connect*? It's fiendishly tough. As its title suggests, the contestants are tasked to figure out the connections between seemingly disparate things – be it people, places, chemical equations or other tricky stuff.

Well, I was reminded of it when we were putting this issue together. Our premise is simple: classic rock music owes so very much to Deep Purple. Without Purple, we wouldn't have had Rainbow or Dio or Whitesnake or Hughes/Thrall or... The list just goes on and on. Seriously, the Purple family tree is so extensive that there's no chance we could cover all the ways that band's branches sneak into the fabric of rock (in manners obvious and otherwise) in a single issue. But we've covered the major ones.

What reminded me of that TV quiz show, however, was when I thought about the non-Purple-related features in this issue. *And yet they've all got a Purple connection!* Reunited Italian proggers PFM opened for them, Wishbone Ash got their record deal thanks to Blackmore, Michael Schenker was given a chance to join Purple (and MSG singer Graham Bonnet was in Rainbow), Black Stone Cherry have been known to tear through a Deep Purple cover in concert... It's only The Damned that I can't think of even a tangential connection. Any suggestions? Let us know at the usual address...



THE COVER: DEEP PURPLE
IMAGE MANIPULATION
BY MAGICTORCH

Siân Llewellyn,
Editor

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This month's contributors



ROB HUGHES

Rob has been a regular contributor to *Classic Rock* for the past 10 years. This month he talks to Italian prog legends PFM about their extraordinary career and recent comeback (p56). When not scribbling for *CR*, Rob is a weekly guest of BBC 6Music presenter Marc Riley, with whom he also currently hosts a successful podcast, *The A-Z of David Bowie*.



IAN FORTNAM

Long-standing Damned disciple Ian first heard New Rose at an Eddie And The Hot Rods gig in '76, skipped off school and bunked the trains to see the band in '77, and by the year's end had even bagged a priceless autograph ('Sensible Says Anteater'). This issue (p68) he profiles Vanian, Gray and Captain and discovers what goes on beneath the beret.



SAM WILLIAMS

Sam Williams is one half of Magictorch, who, along with Mike Chipperfield (responsible for last year's Fleetwood Mac *CR* cover) is always happy to get stuck in to a cover. "This was another fine challenge – part illustrator, part fashion designer, all Deep Purple. Not sure I have what it takes to pull off an *In Rock* jacket – or Whitesnake boots and trousers, for that matter!"



5150

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Now playing: Manic Street Preachers, *Resistance Is Futile*

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ABC January-December 2017: 42,236

Thanks this issue to Louise Brock and Steve Newman (design), Mark Wheatley and Justin Hood (production)

Cover photo: GEMA/IconicPix **Image manipulation:** Sam Williams at Magictorch

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Digital

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Subscriptions

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Classic Rock, Future Publishing plc, 1-10 Praed Mews, London W2 1QY

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Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd on behalf of Future.

Distributed by Marketforce, 2nd Floor, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London E14 5HU. Tel 0203 787 9001

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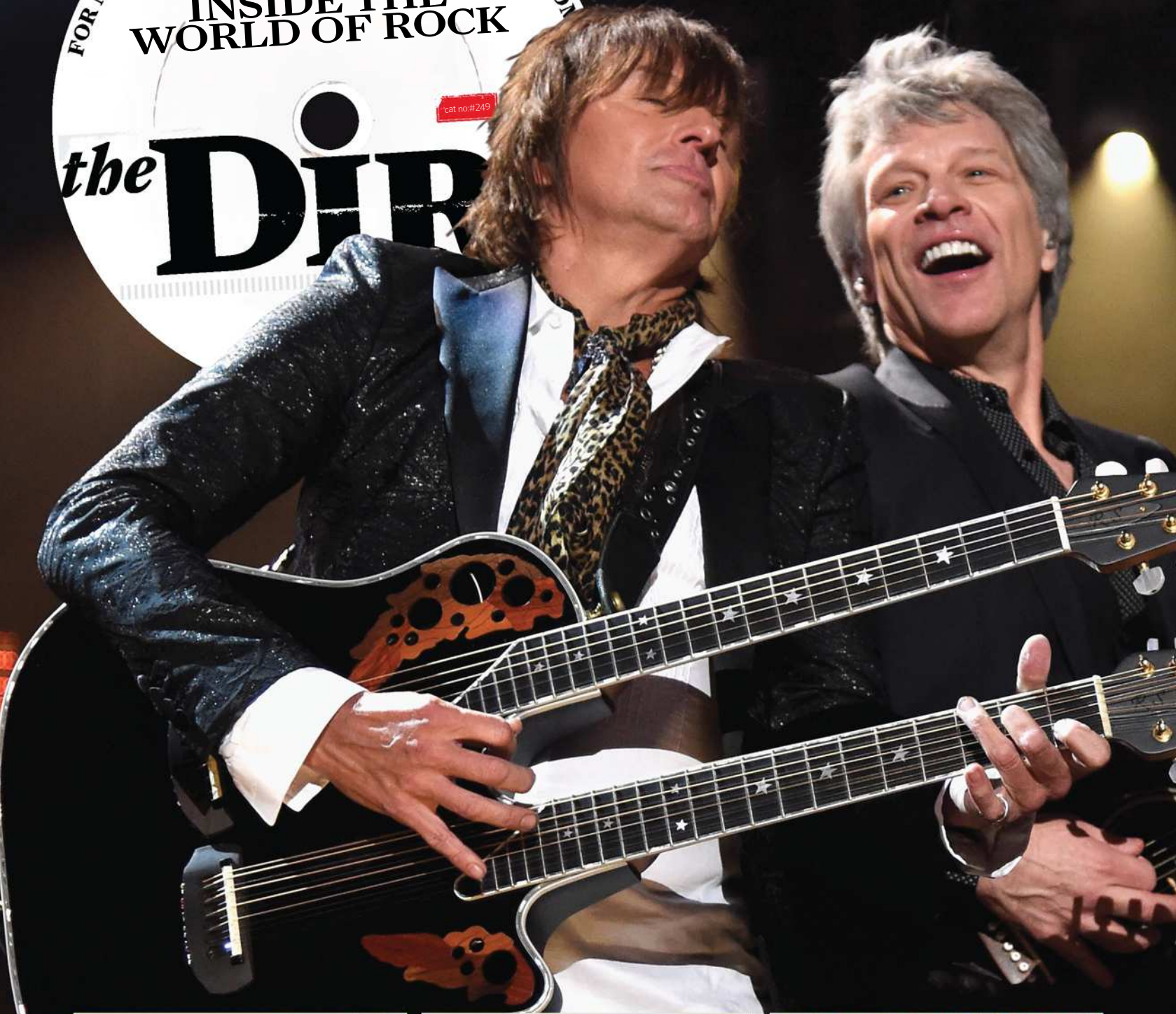
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INSIDE THE
WORLD OF ROCK

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the **DIR**



What a Night... The Moody Blues' Justin Hayward and John Lodge.



Keeping the faith: Bon Jovi's original line-up reunite.



The Cars spot something crawling up Ric Ocasek's jacket...

Richie Sambora, JBJ and the rest of the original Bon Jovi line-up play some of their hits at the HOF ceremony.

Sambora and Such rejoin Bon Jovi at Hall Of Fame

Moodies, Cars and Dire Straits also inducted, but Mark Knopfler is a no-show.

BON JOVI, THE Moody Blues, Dire Straits and The Cars were this year's inductees into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. All five members of the best-known Bon Jovi line-up attended the ceremony in Cleveland, including guitarist Richie Sambora, who left the band in 2013, and former bassist Alec John Such, who walked away in 1994. Current bass player Hugh McDonald was also honoured.

Jon Bon Jovi's difficult relationship with the Hall Of Fame is well documented – the frontman has claimed one of its key figures had “made it their personal mission to fuck with me” – and for a while a no-show had appeared entirely possible, but in the end he turned up.

“I’ve been writing this speech since I first strummed the broom and sang at the top of the stairs of my childhood home,” he said in a 20-minute-long acceptance speech. “I’ve actually written it many ways, many times. Some days I write the thank-you speech, other days I write the fuck-you speech. Writing it was, in fact, therapeutic for me in a lot of ways. I certainly see things differently tonight than I would have ten, twenty, thirty years ago. But in the end it’s all about time. It took a lot of people to get us here tonight – and not all of them were hairstylists.”

The band performed their hits *Livin’ On A Prayer*, *You Give Love A Bad Name* and *It’s My Life* as well as the more recent *When We Were Us*. Sambora was thrilled to share a stage with his old friends again, commenting: “The hardest thing to do is to find four guys with yourself that will go through anything, that will work hard, that’ll go crazy, whatever it took. And we did that for a really long time. But boy was it fun. If I wrote a book, it would be the best time I ever had.”

Bon Jovi were introduced by the notorious radio presenter Howard Stern, who besides making childish gags about the sizes of the band’s penises and the farts of drummer Tico Torres, paraphrased from the lyric of *Wanted Dead Or Alive* – “They are cowboys on a steel horse they rode” – and declared: “Eat shit, Bob Dylan! Fuck you! That’s music! Look, this is an honour long overdue. I don’t think you can go anywhere in this world without hearing a classic Bon Jovi tune somewhere, and it’s pretty incredible their whole success story.”

John Illsley, Alan Clark and Guy Fletcher made acceptance speeches for Dire Straits, whose Mark and David Knopfler and Pick Withers declined to attend.

These reasons for their absences went unexplained, although during the build-up to the ceremony David Knopfler had posted sarcastically on Facebook: “In their wisdom, after promising to pay my expenses [the HOF] reneged on their promise. I can well understand that, with only five million dollars a year in sponsorships and a hundred thousand dollars a table and no fees for the artist, paying my taxi to the airport must have given them heart murmurs.”

Illsley did his best to address Straits mainman Mark Knopfler’s no-show. “There’s been a lot of speculation about why Mark isn’t here,” he said, “but I assure you it’s just a personal thing. It’s personal reasons, let’s just leave it at that.” Needless to say the members of Dire Straits who did attend didn’t perform at the event.

The Cars, who split up for the second time back in 2010, were back together again for one final night. Benjamin Orr died of pancreatic cancer almost two decades ago but, helped out by Weezer’s Scott Shriner on bass, original members Ric Ocasek, Elliot Easton, Greg Hawkes and David Robinson performed a four-song set – *My Best Friend’s*

Girl, *You Might Think*, *Moving In Stereo* and *Just What I Needed* – following an introduction from Brandon Flowers of The Killers, whose own band honoured the late Tom Petty with a version of *American Girl*.

Acknowledging the Moody Blues’ pioneering use of the Mellotron and its influence on acts such as “Yes, Genesis, ELO and many others”, Ann Wilson of Heart brought the Moodies on to the stage, who in sharp contrast to Stern kept things classy and respectful. “This is the home of my heroes,” commented frontman Justin Hayward, adding what a joy it was “to be celebrated, even in the same street, the same building, the same town as Buddy Holly and the Everly Brothers and the woman who showed us how it should be done, and that’s Nina Simone.” Simone, who died in 2003, was also among the other inductees this year.

The Moodies played four songs – *I’m Just a Singer (In A Rock And Roll Band)*, *Your Wildest Dreams*, *Nights In White Satin* and *Ride My See-Saw* – which served to remind us of Ann Wilson’s other point: that save for *Satin* they have “always been a kick-ass rock band”.

For the first time in years there was no closing-out jam session, perhaps reflecting the somewhat muted air of the night’s celebration. **DL**



Dire Straits' John Illsley delivers his acceptance speech.

“It took a lot of people to get us here tonight, and not all of them were hairstylists.”

Jon Bon Jovi

RIP

Thank you
and good night.

Mike Harrison

September 3, 1945 – March 25, 2018

Carlisle-born Mike Harrison, once hailed as 'the white Ray Charles', was a founding member of Spooky Tooth and their lead singer at various periods throughout their history. He was 72 at the time of his passing. Cause of death has yet to be revealed.

Mars Cowling

Died March 20, 2018

Peter 'Mars' Cowling, the bassist who played on the biggest hits by the Pat Travers Band, has died at the age of 72. Born in England, he joined Canadian guitarist Travers in 1975. Later he played with Gypsy Queen. Cowling was diagnosed with leukaemia in February.

Martin Cockerham

August 27, 1950 – April 5, 2018

Vocalist/guitarist Martin Cockerham was a member of noted Lancashire-based psych-folk-rockers Spirogyra, who released three albums between 1971 and '73 and reuniting for a further two in the current millennium. Cause of death has yet to be announced.

Yvonne Staples

Died April 10, 2018

Yvonne Staples was a member of the Staple Singers, whose hits included *Respect Yourself*, *I'll Take You There* and *Heavy Makes You Happy*. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1999. The 80-year-old had battled colon cancer for two years.

Professor Stephen Hawking

January 8, 1942 – March 14, 2018

World-renowned scientist Steven Hawking was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 1963, but defied medical predictions to survive for more than another 50 years. Pink Floyd sampled Hawking's voice for *Keep Talking* on their 1994 album *The Division Bell*. In 2016 he joined Anathema on stage for the song during a concert in Spain. He was 76.

Claudia Fontaine

August 26, 1960 – March 13, 2018

A noted backing singer, London-born Claudia Fontaine toured with Pink Floyd on their *The Division Bell* tour and appeared on their live album *Pulse*. Other credits include The Jam, Joe Cocker, Tim Finn, Elvis Costello, Squeeze and Robbie Williams. She was 57 at the time of her death.

NEWS

Ronnie Wood says he's been given the all clear after his recent cancer scare. The Rolling Stones guitarist, who turns 71 in June, underwent keyhole surgery last year to remove a lesion on his left lung, but doctors have now told him: "Go and enjoy life."

L7 are preparing their first album in almost 20 years. The band, who reunited in 2015, play Castle Donington Download Festival June 9, Glasgow Garage 10 and London Electric Ballroom 12.

The Quireboys will celebrate the 10th anniversary of their album *Homewreckers & Heartbreakers* with a show at London's Forum on September 14. Support comes from H.e.a.t. and Aaron Buchanan & The Cult Classics.

Former Judas Priest guitarist **KK Downing** has opened a new concert venue in Wolverhampton. KK's Steel Mill is situated in a Grade II-listed building, the Starworks Warehouse on Frederick Street.



Whitesnake are to release a new single, *Shut Up & Kiss Me*, ahead of the band's thirteenth album, *Flesh & Blood*. David Coverdale (pictured) recently said the album (expected in the summer) "has all the necessary Whitesnake elements that I need to call it Whitesnake, but with a vibrant, fresh coat of paint."

Country music star **Kenny Rogers** has cancelled all future dates of his farewell tour, dubbed *All In For The Gambler*, due to a "series of health challenges".



Lindsey Buckingham. Insets: his replacements Mike Campbell (top) and Neil Finn.

Lindsey out of Mac

Neil Finn and Mike Campbell in as replacements.

IN A SHOCK MOVE, Lindsey Buckingham is out of Fleetwood Mac, and has been replaced by two guitarists: Crowded House's Neil Finn, and Mike Campbell from Tom Petty's band the Heartbreakers. Fleetwood Mac have yet to explain the move. *Rolling Stone* claim Buckingham was sacked over a disagreement to do with the band's upcoming tour, although apparently his departure had been on the cards for some time.

The band's official statement stressed that Fleetwood Mac "has always been about an amazing collection of songs that are performed with a unique blend of talents", with drummer Mick Fleetwood adding: "We jammed with Mike and Neil and the chemistry really worked and let the band realise that this is the right combination to go forward with in Fleetwood Mac style. We know we have something new, yet it's got the unmistakable Mac sound."

Neil Finn later posted the amusing Tweet: "Snow warnings for parts of the country, the mystery of Stonehenge solved and yes I've joined Fleetwood Mac."

Mike Campbell added that "after [just] one rehearsal I can tell that it's going to be an amazing collaboration", and promised to "honour Buckingham's songs while at the same time bring my own musicality to the band".

Buckingham, along with Stevie Nicks, joined Fleetwood Mac in 1974, and went on to write many of their biggest hits, including *Big Love*, *Go Your Own Way*, and *Tango In The Night*. He left the band in acrimonious circumstances following the recording of their 1987 album *Tango In The Night*, then re-joined a decade later. His final show with the band was at Radio City Music Hall in New York in January this year. Appropriately, the set on that night ended with *Go Your Own Way*.

Tour dates are yet to be announced. **DL**

Tyler and Daltrey take time out

Aerosmith and Who frontmen doing their own thing.

STEVEN TYLER AND ROGER DALTREY are both hitting the solo trail this summer, the former playing a European tour that includes just one UK show, at London's Forum on August 17, while the latter releases a ninth album of his own (albeit with a little help from a good friend).

Tyler is breaking away from Aerosmith – and indeed rock music – to indulge in his love of country, revealed back in 2016 via the album *We're All Somebody From Somewhere*. For his European tour he'll be joined by Nashville-based band the Loving Mary Band, fronted by Ruby Stewart (daughter of Rod Stewart), Alyssa Bonagura (daughter of Kathie Ballie and Michael Bonagura of Baillie & The Boys), and long-time Aerosmith collaborator Marti Frederiksen, for a set described as a mix of "his most recognisable hits" and solo material.

Daltrey releases a new solo album, titled *As Long As I Have You*, on June 1 via Polydor. It features his Who bandmate Pete Townshend on seven tracks. Its 11 tracks mix originals and songs that have inspired Daltrey, including Nick Cave's *Into My Arms*, *How Far* by Stephen Stills and Stevie Wonder's *You Haven't Done Nothing*. The album's title track was originally recorded by Garnet Mimms in 1964, the same year that Daltrey, Townshend, John Entwistle and Keith Moon changed their name from The High Numbers to The Who.

Daltrey says of the record: "This is a return to the very beginning, to the time before Pete started writing our songs, to a time when we were a teenage band playing soul music to small crowds in church halls. That's what we were – a soul band. And now I can sing soul with all the experience you need to sing it." **DL**

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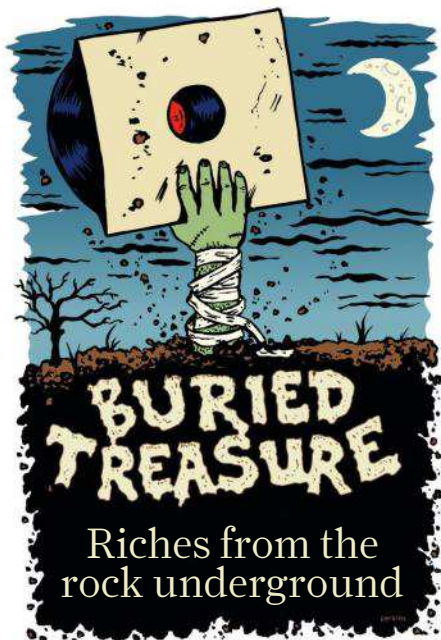
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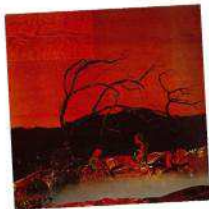
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C.A. QUINTET

Trip Thru Hell, Candy Floss Records, USA, 1969. £1,800



If there's one album that epitomises the creativity, philosophy and musical integrity of underground American psychedelic rock of the late 60s, then perhaps *Trip Thru Hell* is it. Released locally on the bespoke Candy Floss imprint, in very small quantities, it has become one of the most revered and sought-after genre albums of its time.

Minneapolis-based C.A. Quintet were the brainchild of young trumpeter-turned-guitarist Ken Erwin. In 1967 they released a couple of solid pop 45s before venturing into weirder, darker, fantastical realms on the album *Trip Thru Hell*.

The epic and eerie 12.30 title track is split into two, which open and close the album retrospectively, like the credits of a very strange movie, or in this case an acid trip. Sandwiched in-between are five tracks of musical excellence. *Colorado*

'It must have seemed like an epic voyage into the unknown.'

Mourning, *Cold Spider*, *Sleepy Hollow Time* and *Smooth As Silk* are shining examples of garage-tinged psychedelic acid rock, hitting the darker end of that mystical decade. Tasteful use of trumpet, crude-sounding organ, studio effects and haunting female vocals add further spice.

Housed in a befittingly macabre and surreal sleeve, at the time *Trip Thru Hell* must have seemed like an epic voyage into the unknown. With the dawning of progressive rock and an abundance of dark concept albums, it might now seem relatively tame in its lysergic terror, although it's still a monumental work. Perhaps surprisingly, no drugs were used during the making of this album. **LD**



Glenn Tipton made an emotional return to the stage with his Judas Priest bandmates at their recent gig in New Jersey, performing on a three-song encore of *Metal Gods*, *Breaking The Law* and *Living After Midnight*. Due to Parkinson's disease the guitarist has stepped back from live performance, although he remains with the band on the road and plays when he feels able.

Rose Tattoo frontman Angry Anderson says he's been informed by Angus Young that **AC/DC** are going to write a new album. "I asked him who [else] was in the band and he said: 'Axl,'" he says. Def Leppard guitarist Phil Collen believes this would be a mistake, telling an interviewer: "I thought Axl Rose [did a great job] [but] I wouldn't do that if I was Angus. You've got one person left, so it's not really AC/DC. It becomes karaoke."



Slash Featuring Myles Kennedy & The Conspirators have begun recording their third studio album for release in the autumn. "It's got some cool songs and a great live feel," says Slash (pictured). "This line-up has hit a great, creative stride which really shows on this next record."

Def Leppard release the first of four career-spanning box sets on June 1 via Budgeon Riffola. Volume One combines the group's first four studio albums along with bonus live material, studio tracks and rare cuts spread across eight heavyweight vinyl LPs and seven CDs.



WELCOME BACK

The Sheepdogs

Paying your dues? Try driving five hours to a gig and then having literally nobody turn up. It can be a dog's life.

A ROCK'N'ROLL BAND formed 12 years ago in Canada, The Sheepdogs were on the verge of calling it a day when in 2011 they became the first unsigned band to appear on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine. With the band now six albums into their career, frontman Ewan Currie explains why new flavours have been blended into the appropriately titled new album *Changing Colours*.

What prompted the addition of trombone, clarinet, Latin percussion, pedal steel guitar, fiddle and banjo to the mix for *Changing Colours*?

Just a desire to avoid staleness and poke at the boundaries of our music. I always found it interesting when back in the 1970s bands flirted with other genres but still retained their rock'n'roll core. I'm relieved that the fans have embraced that.

The shirts, beards and hairstyles suggest the Sheepdogs are 'retro', but would you consider it a compliment? It's not an insult. If you looked at my record collection... I couldn't deny it.

Any band that cites the Allmans, Humble Pie, Creedence Clearwater, Sly Stone and Crosby Stills Nash & Young is going to be okay with *Classic Rock* magazine.

Yeah, but, as I hope this new record shows, we have no desire to live in the past or mimic our idols.

The Sheepdogs have won four Junos, Canada's equivalent of a Brit, and have their own beer, Prairie Gold Ale. How big are the band in Canada? Well, we're quite established, but we're not exactly superstars who are dating models [laughs]. We're still building things up. We're music lovers who really care about the records we make.

All the same, the band once made a fifty-hour drive to Halifax, Nova Scotia and literally nobody turned up. That was tough. We started out the most humble way possible, and incrementally we went from a terrible band to an okay one to one that can please crowds.

That experience in Halifax must have been soul destroying?

Not really. There were a few of those setbacks, but back then we were just happy to be in a band. And those lessons really paid off, because on our current tour we have two sold-out dates in that same city. It's all the sweeter for those past horrible trips.

"We have no desire to live in the past or mimic our idols."

When The Sheepdogs became the first unsigned band to appear on the cover of *Rolling Stone*, it pretty much saved the group's bacon.

That's true. We had

day jobs and debt. Putting it bluntly, we are four white dudes from Canada who play old rock music. It wasn't a particularly sexy story to write about, but the media attention gave us a year in which I felt I lived about five lifetimes.

Two years ago you supported The Temperance Movement on a UK tour. Stylistically that seemed a good fit. Yeah, that was a great tour for us. It put us in front of a lot of people into rock'n'roll who didn't know about us.

Are you now going to play over here more regularly?

Yeah, that's the plan. The UK is somewhere that we're going to keep on hammering. Following our dates in April, which was pretty much a press trip, we'll be back later in the year. **DL**

Changing Colours is out now via *Dine Alone Records*.



HIGH HOPES

Kip Moore

His first album was huge, but don't call him an overnight success. He'd worked for years for it.

YOU COULD BE forgiven for thinking Kip Moore is an overnight sensation. *Up All Night*, his 2012 debut, yielded three huge country hits, made the *Billboard* Top 10 and went platinum in the States. Yet that success was the result of a long and arduous journey. Moore had moved to Nashville from small-town Georgia eight years earlier. "Where I was from, you never really heard about people making it in the music business," he explains. "It just felt like such a foreign thing. Arriving in Nashville was like stepping off on Mars. I couldn't get in the damn door for five years, so I just had to teach myself how to become a songwriter."

The frustrations of his formative years are laid bare in *Guitar Man*, a highlight of latest album, *Slowheart*.

"Guitar Man was who I was for so many years," he says. "It was inspired by seeing this guy playing in a pub, being the life of the party. Everybody was talking about him afterwards, but nobody knew his name. He was completely faceless, longing for so much more. I did the same thing for so long in South Georgia and even in Tennessee. It reminded me of the struggle, the lonely journey."

Moore is several cuts above the standard bro-country fare that runs through mainstream Nashville these days. Not only does he exhibit a knack for a decent melody and a cutting lyric, but he

also artfully blurs the line between country tradition and old-school rock, helped by a singing voice dashed with blue-collar grit. "I grew up in a rock world and my voice is what it is," he offers. "Those rock'n'roll influences are always bleeding through the music. Growing up, I was a huge fan of AC/DC and people like Bryan Adams, Bob Seger and Creedence Clearwater Revival, and Tom Petty was probably the biggest influence."

This stylistic fluidity fed into 2015's *Wild Ones*, Moore's darker follow-up to *Up All Night*, and now into the raw, stripped-back aesthetic of *Slowheart*.

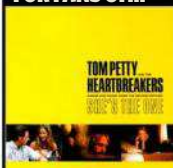
Prior to recording the album, he took an extended break to recharge his creative batteries. "I just wasn't in a good place—mentally, spiritually or physically," he admits. "I'm on the road for two hundred days a year. That puts a tax on you, in lots of different ways. There are so many people in your life that you neglect; relationships and friendships crumble. When I stepped away from everything, a lot of the writing changed to a different direction."

Slowheart includes songs about fame, struggle, the superficiality of celebrity life and Moore's overriding belief in the power of music. He's already planning its follow-up, promising spoonfuls of Lyrnvd Skynvrd and classic Californian country.

"I want to be great at what I do and give people every ounce of me," he states. "So you have to be bold and try just about anything. I might fall down a few times, but I always feel like I'm going to land on my feet. That's the attitude I'll always have." **RH**

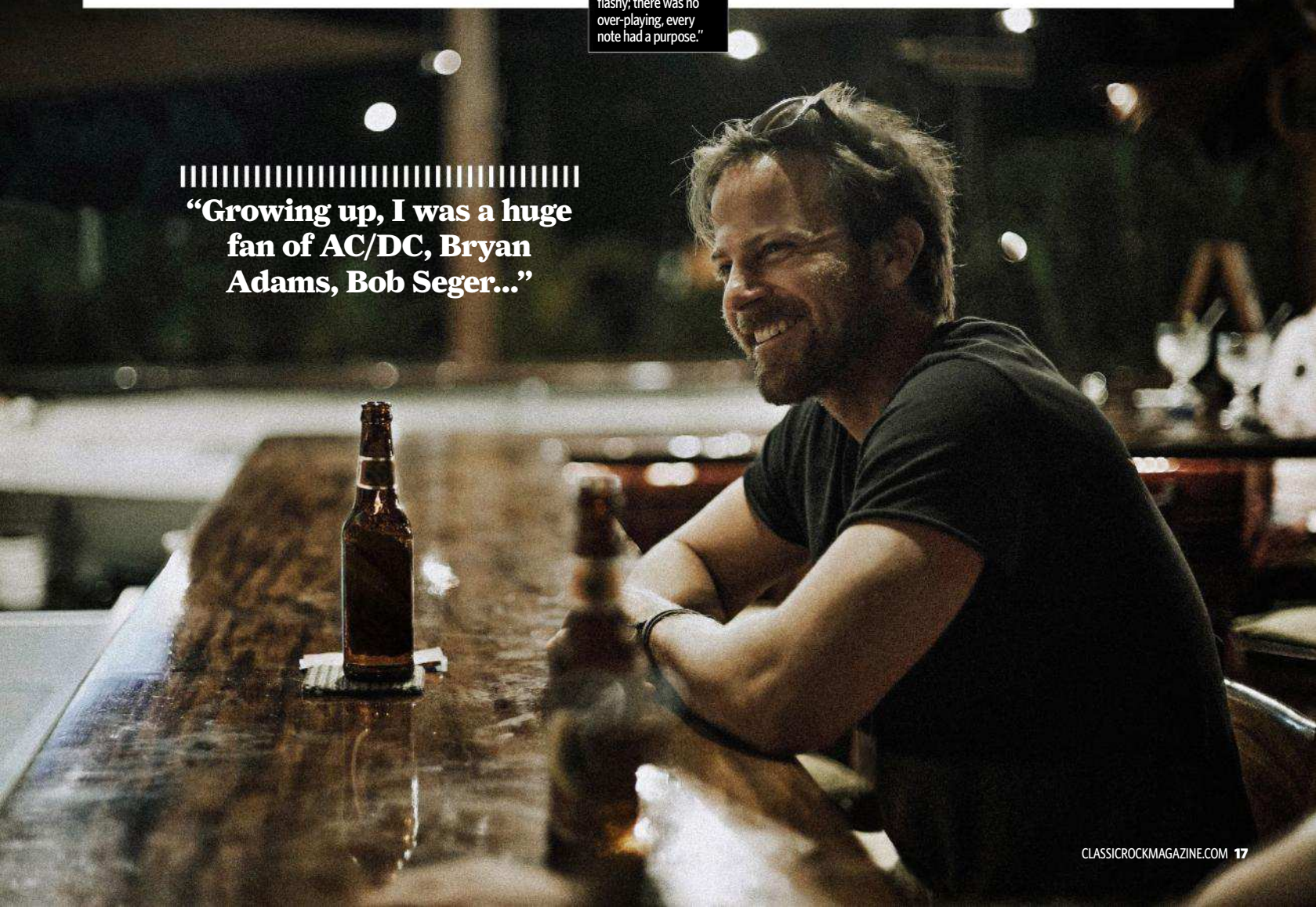
Slowheart is out now via Spinefarm.

FOR FANS OF...



"Tom Petty had such a direct way of saying things," Moore says. "His songs always felt like a conversation. And his melodic compass was amazing. It's so difficult to write those simplistic, perfect melodies, but he was so great at it. The guitar licks were never flashy; there was no over-playing, every note had a purpose."

“Growing up, I was a huge fan of AC/DC, Bryan Adams, Bob Seger...”



Sharp Dressed Man

Rock 'n' Roll accessories



This month, @jamiehibbard is elegantly wasted in these three sartorial stand-outs.

Duke & Dexter Chelsea boot 2.0 mono boot

You don't get much more of a rock'n'roll style of footwear than a Chelsea boot. Worn by icons such as Jimi Hendrix and Keith Richards, all the way through to younger rockers, the Chelsea boot's very silhouette has become synonymous with rebel sensibilities. This boot from British-born footwear label Duke & Dexter is hand-made in England from Northampton suede for a very distinctive monochrome look. They also do a Stormtrooper version. **£295 @DukeAndDexter** DukeAndDexter.com

HebTroCo 1485 Field Jacket

Keeping it home-grown, this new jacket from northern powerhouse HebTroCo is based on a British Army jacket pattern from the 1960s, originally made by this same manufacturer. Using 100 per cent merino 12.5oz wool cloth, it should last a lifetime. **£375 @HebTroCo**

Stussy skull-pattern short-sleeve shirt

With its a Día de los Muertos snake-and-skull pattern, this shirt is sure to get you noticed in your local. **£175 @Stussy** Stussy.com



NEWS

Tony Iommi is to stage a special evening of conversation with television presenter Gary Newbon at Birmingham Town Hall on June 23. The veteran guitarist will be talking about his life and music career.

Supersonic Blues Machine & Friends, featuring special guest Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top, have announced a one-off UK show at London's Shepherd's Bush Empire on July 4.

A new toxicology report has revealed that **Prince** had "exceedingly high" levels of the opioid fentanyl in his body at the time of his death in April 2016. Fentanyl is 50 times more powerful than heroin.

Skid Row bassist Rachel Bolan has revealed that Corey Taylor of Slipknot/Stone Sour and the Halestorm duo of Lizzy Hale and Joe Hottinger have contributed to the writing of the band's next album, their first with ZP Theart on vocals.



Tommy Lee (pictured) won't be pressing charges against his 18-year-old son Brandon, who knocked out the former Mötley Crüe drummer during a heated argument. After initially pursuing legal action, Lee snr, 55, changed his mind.

Wayne Kramer has confirmed the line-up of **MC5** to tour for the 50th anniversary of the album *Kick Out The Jams*. The guitarist will be joined by Kim Thayil of Soundgarden on guitar, Fugazi drummer Brendan Canty, Dug Pinnick of King's X on bass and vocalist Marcus Durant of Zen Guerrilla.



WELCOME BACK

Melvins

The band without whom "Nirvana doesn't exist" return with album number 26, featuring two bass players.

FORMED IN MONTESANO, Washington in 1983 and centred on vocalist/guitarist Buzz Osborne and drummer Dale Crover, the Melvins were an inspiration to Nirvana, and prime movers in the experimental rock of the 80s that led to grunge and 90s alt.rock. Their twenty-sixth album, *Pinkus Abortion Technician*, is a metallic, low-end exploration featuring two bass players: Redd Kross's Steven McDonald and Butthole Surfers' Jeff Pinkus. Osborne elaborates.

What was the idea with this album?

We wanted to do a record with two bass players. We thought that would be cool. We had the idea when we recorded the double album *A Walk With Love & Death*, which came out last July.

The songs are mostly originals, with a couple of covers.

We do *Stop Moving To Florida*, which is the James Gang song *Stop* mixed with the Butthole Surfers' *Moving To Florida*, and our take on the Moving Sidewalks' version of [The Beatles'] *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*. We always tried to combine everything from the Shangri-Las to Throbbing Gristle. I'm not a big fan of genres. I prefer to be judged on my individual merits.

Melvins might be heavy, but you always keep your groove and melody.

Some people might think we can't play or sing at all. I always thought our records would sell millions. Others didn't agree!

You can't really go wrong if you like The Beatles.

When people say: "I don't like The Beatles," that's like saying: "I don't like ice cream." It's absurd. We always felt way more open-minded than the people we

were around, especially the punk rockers. And we knew a lot of classic rock types who thought punk was atrocious, and I couldn't understand that either. To me there's a direct correlation between Jerry Lee Lewis, Jim Morrison, Iggy Pop and Johnny Rotten.

You had a hand in shaping Nirvana.

Nirvana doesn't exist without us [Cobain and Novoselic met at the Melvins' practice space, Crover was an early drummer, and Osborne introduced Dave Grohl to

the band]. They were surrounded by a lot of people I disagreed with, and I'm no fan of Cobain's wife. She hated me as well. That story is a tragic one and it ended horribly. I have a hard time dealing with it.

"You don't want safe, sane, you want unsafe, insane."

Bass players, you've had a few – including Gene Simmons.

We played one song for a live show [in 1993], so that was it. But we toured with Kiss after that, and those guys couldn't have been nicer, Gene and Paul particularly. The other two were waste cases. They wouldn't have known us from a plate of macaroni. To this day if I run into them, they [Gene and Paul] go out of their way to be nice to me – a lot nicer than a lot of lower-level fuckhead bands.

For a heavy band, 'Melvins' isn't a heavy name.

I didn't want a punk rock or metal name. I wanted to be more irritating. My advice is to be as peculiar as possible. Look at Alice Cooper. If he looked like GI Joe, would that have worked? Maybe. But it worked better for him to look like a total monster. Iggy Pop looked insane. You don't want safe, sane, you want unsafe, insane. **JK**

Pinkus Abortion Technician is available now on *Ipecac*.



HIGH HOPES

Palace Of The King

Ambitious Australian rockers' third album brings some new tricks to an old sound.

"THIS IS A DEFINING moment for us," Palace Of The King's lead singer/guitarist Tim Henwood enthuses about his band's latest album. "For me, this record is a statement of intent."

Establishing an appetising fusion of Americana and British classic rock with two previous studio albums was only the first step. Now they're aiming for the top.

Many bands seem to peak on their third record, but that cliché doesn't apply to Melbourne-based 70s rock modernists POTK: the thunderous *Get Right With Your Maker* has the foundations of a band continuing to push themselves. Packing some serious heat, it's an ambitious exploration of what a Robert Plant-fronted Deep Purple might have sounded like. Testifying to Henwood's enthusiasm is the seven-minute album opener *I Am The Storm*. Borderline prog in all its textured colour, it takes you on a blues-rooted journey so vivid you can feel the rain.

"I feel that song in my soul, man. It's opened a lot of doors, and that's really exciting to talk about," Henwood explains eagerly. "We're already talking about the next album. We want to make something that we'll be proud of and make people think: 'I can't believe they did that,'" he says, laughing.

Upholding Australia's reputation for harbouring some of

the hardest-working bands on the planet, POTK – completed by Sean Johnston (keyboards/guitar), Travis Dragani (drums) and Anthony Licciardi (bass) – haven't stopped recording or touring since releasing their self-titled debut EP in 2013. Talking to *Classic Rock* in the early hours of the morning, having just wrapped up a show, Henwood (previously a member of The Superjesus, Androids and Rogue Traders) should be wiped but he's not. And his enthusiasm is infectious. It's obvious that he lives and breathes this band. So how did he come to be in Palace Of The King?

"I didn't know any of the guys before the band started," he explains. "I got this random Facebook message that just said: 'Hey, would you be interested in checking out our stuff and being our singer?' They sent me these instrumental recordings, and they were just pure gold, man. So after writing all the vocal parts on those riffs, I replied with: 'Boys, I'm in if you're in?'"

Given that it's led them to, among other things, touring with Aussie hellraisers Airbourne, playing to tens of thousands of people halfway around the world, it looks like hooking up wasn't a bad call at all.

"This band was never about analysing things too closely or over-thinking it," Henwood says. "In the end we follow our balls and our heart. I'd be very surprised if we didn't have a new album finished by the end of the year." **HD**

Get Right With Your Maker is out now via Golden Robot.

FOR FANS OF...



Learning from the legendary godfathers of rock who went before them, POTK have challenged themselves to push their sound further without losing their identity.

"We sometimes wear our influences on our sleeve," says Henwood. "I reckon if you like Deep Purple, Pink Floyd and Zeppelin with a sprinkle of AC/DC, you'd dig us."

"We don't analyse or over-think things. We follow our balls and our heart."





Uriah Heep

Easy Livin'

A song triggered by a conversation in a taxi and then dashed off in 10 minutes, it broke the band in the US, helped convert some of their harshest critics and propelled Heep into rock's big league.

Words: **Dave Everley**

Sometimes the course of one's life can be changed by an offhand comment. For Ken Hensley, Uriah Heep's keyboard player and guitarist throughout the 70s, that moment came during a taxi ride home after a marathon three-day studio session.

"We'd been rushing to finish an album before we left to go on tour," recalls Hensley. "We were having a conversation, and someone mentioned how people think we have such an easy life, how we just show up, collect the dollars and go home. The words 'easy life' stuck in my head. When the taxi dropped me off at my flat, I went in, put the kettle on, sat down at the piano, and within about ten minutes that song was finished."

The song was *Easy Livin'*, a galloping hymn to chasing hopes and ambitions even as they remain tantalisingly out of reach. Released as a single in 1972, it helped transform Heep from a mid-card rock band into arena-filling heavyweights. Almost 50 years after it was first released, it remains both their best-known song and one of the great anthems of rock's golden age. "We were already doing well, but that song took us to another level of success," says Hensley.

With three albums already under their belt, Heep were far from unknown before they made *Easy Livin'* and its parent album, *Demons And Wizards*. They offered up a more grandiose alternative to Led Zeppelin's priapic blues or Black Sabbath's primal howl. Hensley had done his time with an assortment of 60s pop and prog bands, and it showed – Uriah Heep favoured melodic bombast and musical intricacy over deafening bludgeon.

Not everyone bought into it. "If this group makes it I'll have to commit suicide," proclaimed *Rolling Stone* writer Melissa Mills in a review of their debut album, 1970's *Very 'Eavy, Very 'Umble*.

But Heep didn't need the blessing of the mainstream media. They'd notched up a string of hit singles in Germany and cracked the Top 40 album chart. The flip side was increased pressure from their

management and label to keep the success coming, churning out the hits.

"Looking back on it, there's absolutely no reason why we should have had to do an album every ten months," says Hensley. "But at the time I was relishing it. We had a whole lot of freedom to do what we wanted, which was wonderful."

Heep always had an unconventional internal dynamic. The band's two founders, guitarist Mick Box and singer David Byron, were close, having known each other since they were teenagers. Hensley joined the band in 1969. Relations between Hensley and his bandmates were professional and cordial, but they were never especially close.

"I wasn't really friends with anyone in the band," he says. "It wasn't like we were enemies, but I didn't see any reason to socialise with them, as our interests outside of the band were completely different. We rarely collaborated in terms of writing the songs. Basically, I wrote all the songs by myself."

Despite that, Hensley says the mood in the band was electric when they began work on their fourth album. Heep entered West London's Lansdowne Studios to record *Demons And Wizards* in early 1972, then took a break to tour America. When they returned, bassist Mark Clarke had been replaced by Gary Thain.

"It was five guys having the time of their lives in a recording studio with halfway-decent equipment," says Hensley. "There was no stopping us. It was out of control but under control at the same time."

New songs such as *The Wizard*, *Circle Of Hands* and the two-part *Paradise/The Spell* were complicated and grandiose. By contrast, *Easy Livin'* was urgent and direct, powered by drummer Lee Kerslake's relentless shuffling beat and Hensley's grinding, stabbing keyboards.

"I knew when I wrote it that it was a great song," says Hensley. "And when the band converted it into what they did, I knew it was special."

Hensley had sung on a couple of Heep songs before, notably *Lady In Black* and the

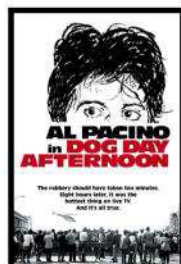


title track of the band's third album, *Look At Yourself*, but he wasn't tempted to step up for the mic this time around. "Not with a singer like David around," he says.

Byron was a charismatic showman whose strident, ringing voice was a world away from the likes of Robert Plant or Paul Rodgers. If the music propelled *Easy Livin'* along the runway at high speed, then Byron gave the song wings.

"He could take a song and turn it into magic," Hensley says of his former bandmate, who died of alcohol-related illness in 1985. "He was a different singer – he leaned more towards pop than rock. And that's why he was virtually impossible to replace."

Easy Livin' was the second single to be taken from *Demons And Wizards*,



HEEP AT THE MOVIES

You can barely watch a movie these days without hearing a blast of pop or rock music every few minutes. But back in the 70s it was a rarity. So when Uriah Heep's *Easy Livin'* appeared on the soundtrack to the 1975 Al Pacino heist flick *Dog Day Afternoon*, it was a surprise – not least to its writer, Ken Hensley. "I've no idea how it ended up there," he says. "I guess someone was looking for something loud and in-your-face."

Hensley never met Pacino, although he did mingle with various producers when he lived in Hollywood years ago.

"I went to a few parties where they were, but they didn't take me seriously at all cos I was just some long-haired git from England."

And did his dalliance with Hollywood via *Dog Day Afternoon* make him a rich man? "Nah," he snorts. "I get about three or four Euros a year from it."

Easier livin' in '73, thanks to *Easy Livin'* in '72: (l-r) Ken Hensley, Mick Box, Gary Thain, David Byron, Lee Kerslake.



released in the late summer of 1972. The groundwork Heep laid in America paid off. Radio picked up on it. Suddenly, Heep had their first US Top 40 single, dragging *Demons And Wizards* along in its wake.

"We never really saw it coming," says Hensley. "It hit radio hard – and in those days radio wasn't just hugely influential in America, it was influential everywhere. It was like riding on a magic carpet. We were playing sold-out arenas around the world, playing to thousands of people at festivals,

making tons of money. [Laughs] Although I still don't know where most of it went."

Even the critics' view of Heep had changed. Now even *Rolling Stone* magazine was praising them.

"It overcame a lot of the lack of credibility that the band had suffered from within the media," says Hensley. "We were finally impressing some people. But the people we wanted to impress were the ones that bought the records and the concert tickets."

Easy Livin' proved to be Heep's commercial high-water mark, at least in the US. The band's management swiftly bundled them back into the studio to record a follow-up album, *The Magician's Birthday*, which Hensley says he never finished to his satisfaction. He left the band in 1980, leaving sole remaining original member Mick Box to steer them ever since.

Unsurprisingly, Hensley has nothing but fond memories of the song that propelled Uriah Heep up into the superstar bracket. "I've played *Easy Livin'* with a lot of great musicians, but no one can play it like Uriah Heep did," he says. "It was a one-off." 🎧

Ken Hensley's album Rare & Timeless, is out now via BeMG Rights Management.

"I knew when I wrote it that it was a great song. And when the band converted it into what they did, I knew it was special."

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE

Summer 1972

HIGHEST

CHART

POSITION

US No.39; did not chart in UK

PERSONNEL

David Byron
Vocals

Mick Box
Guitar

Ken Hensley
Keyboards

Gary Thain
Bass

Lee Kerslake
Drums

WRITTEN BY

Ken Hensley

PRODUCED BY

Gerry Bron

LABEL

Bronze

Dizzy Reed

GN'R's keyboard player on his solo album, living for music and working with "the triumvirate from hell".

Words: **Henry Yates**

Since the collapse of the classic line-up in the early 90s, Guns N' Roses has been a precarious gig, spitting out musicians at such a rate that Slash once claimed: "There's not one other fucker in the band I even know." It's impressive, then, that Dizzy Reed has held his spot at the keyboards since 1990, and today has a tenure second only to Axl Rose. Ten years after the *Chinese Democracy* album, and with the *Not In This Lifetime* tour parked until June, Reed has found time for a debut solo album, one that runs with the sleaze-rock baton.

What sort of things should we do while listening to your new solo album, *Rock 'N Roll Ain't Easy*?

Drinking. Fighting. Having sex. All of the above. Anything that you consider a good time. And any time you want to be reflective.

The album is brilliantly sleazy: do you take that word as a compliment?

I do, actually. In a lot of cases, that's what we're going for. The cool thing was, since I was producing it and I'd written almost everything, I was in charge, so I could do what the hell I wanted. And it turned out pretty damn good.

What the songs are about?

Dirty Bomb, I'd read some story in the paper about this Russian chick who was selling nuclear secrets for money. I thought: "We're in a fucked place." I handed it to [co-writer] Del James and we turned it into a character, created some imagery along the lines of T.Rex meets Duran Duran. *This Don't Look Like Vegas* is a song that Ricky Warwick and Del brought in, about their twisted adventure to Vegas. *Cheers 2 R Oblivion* is the classic 'love gone wrong' song, with a touch of the end of the world, because that's where my head was at. When I wrote that song I didn't care about much at all. The world could have ended, I wouldn't have given a shit. I was in a tough place, going through a hard time with one of my relationships.

Where would you be if you weren't able to find catharsis through music?

There's a very, very good chance I could be in a mental asylum if I didn't play music. There's a chance I could end up there anyway. If I wasn't doing this I'd probably be sitting in a bar somewhere, saying: "God, I wish I was playing music." That's all I've ever done.

How about the title track, *Rock 'N Roll Ain't Easy*?

Y'know, I was in a spot [when I wrote that]. I'd had a lot of success. I'd been around the world. I'd been a part of some great tours, some great records. But suddenly my first marriage had dissolved. Half my stuff was in my trunk and I was living in this dirty apartment in North Hollywood again. And it was raining outside. I'd gone full circle. And I thought: "I'm gonna put this situation to work for me." So I picked up a guitar and I came up with that song. The silver lining is, the person who was living in that apartment ended up being my wife. We're happily married now. But rock'n'roll ain't easy. Most people think it's just sex, drugs and parties. I got into playing music

for a living because I didn't want to have a job. Ironically, to maintain in this business, you have to work way more than most people.

When you joined Guns N' Roses, were you concerned about their reputation?

Nah, I was right there with them. It didn't skip a beat with me, that shit. I was in a band called The Wild – and we lived up to our name.

How wild were the GN'R tours back in the early nineties?

I don't remember.

Are Guns N' Roses better without the drugs?

Everybody's better without the drugs.

What are your favourite moments from the GN'R catalogue?

I'd say *Civil War*, because that was the first song I played with the band and the first time I heard myself on the radio. But I had the triumvirate from hell in the control room – which was Slash, Duff and Axl – telling me what I should do, all at once. But I made it through.

How would you describe your relationship with Axl?

He's a great person. He's one of the funniest people I know. Every night before we go on stage, he comes up and he'll have a joke – and it's usually a good one. And nobody works harder than that guy. He's always misrepresented in the press. It's kinda sad, really, what some people come up with just to sell things.

So many musicians have come and gone in GN'R. What has enabled you to last so long?

I was given a great opportunity by Axl and the band when they were at the top of the heap. I just thought I always want to give back. Whatever they need from me, they're gonna get it.

Have you ever felt like you were close to getting the sack?

No, I don't know if I've ever got that feeling. But if I'm fucking up, someone's gonna let me know.

What has been your biggest waste of money?

Shit, I've never really had money to waste.

Doesn't it pay well being in Guns N' Roses?

It pays okay. But, y'know, I'm good with my money; I got an ex-wife and four kids.

Do keyboard players get the respect they deserve?

Absolutely not. Never, never, never. Y'know, it's a singer and a guitar player's world. We're just living in it.

What were you like as a schoolboy?

I was deceptively quiet, and just wanted to get it over with. My band was my identity. School was just something I had to go through. 

Rock 'N Roll Ain't Easy is out now via Golden Robot.

A full-page photograph of Dizzy Reed, a man with long, wavy brown hair and a beard, wearing dark sunglasses, a black leather jacket, a grey scarf, and blue jeans. He is sitting on a set of concrete stairs with a metal railing. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some graffiti on a wall. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

Dizzy Reed: kept out of
the asylum by music.

**“Rock’n’roll ain’t easy.
Most people think it’s just
sex, drugs and parties.”**



**6 THINGS
YOU NEED TO
KNOW ABOUT...**

Black Foxxes

Mental and physical illness, travel and paying their dues are among the things that have shaped them.

Words: **Polly Glass** Photo: **James Sharrock**

If NEIL YOUNG and Kurt Cobain had a kid, it would sound like Black Foxxes' Mark Holley. The singer/guitarist writes the kind of songs that speak eloquently to tortured souls. Some call it 'depression pop', but that tag doesn't really reflect the intensity and energy at work.

Formed in 2014, the Exeter-based trio – completed by bassist Tristan Jane and drummer Ant Thornton – have inspired a loyal following, with visceral, emotionally charged rock that is both crushingly heavy and beautifully soft. New album *Reiði* takes this to a more diverse level, with Holley drawing from the other-worldly voice of PJ Harvey, and writing much of the album in the wild expanse of Iceland. Now he wants to travel further.

"I'd love to go to Africa," he says, at our photo shoot in the darkly atmospheric caves of Gordon's Wine Bar near the Embankment in London.

"I imagine it'll be somewhere possibly even more extreme. Let's see how far we can take it."

Mental and physical illness have been big parts of their journey.

Long-standing struggles with anxiety, depression and Crohn's disease (which had informed their powerful, emotionally pummelling debut album *I'm Not Well*) left Holley in a pretty dark place. In the run-up to making *Reiði*, he decided to do something about it.

"My mental health, my anxiety, was so bad," he explains. "I was seeing a hypnotherapist, who said: 'You should just book a flight and go somewhere and tackle these things head-on.'"

Accordingly, he packed a bag and headed for the most opposite of his current environment he could think of.

Iceland was a saving grace.

Living alone in a cabin, four or five hours from the capital Reykjavík, the balance of calm with rugged weather and the "slightly alien landscape" turned out to have healing properties.

"There's just something about the place that's really magical," Holley remembers. "And as soon as I went, this love for the country sort of took over me, and I left a lot of myself out there. I overcame a lot. Since then I've gone back, and the second time I went I wrote most of the lyrics for the second album out there."

***Reiði* is mature, diverse and a step up from their debut album.**

Where *I'm Not Well* was all darkness and raw noise – with Holley smothered by personal demons and ill health – *Reiði* (Icelandic for 'rage') is a more



Foxxes on the run: Ant Thornton, Tristan Jane, Mark Holley.

nuanced, sonically varied record. Various tracks are peppered with new elements for the trio, such as orchestral strains and trumpet solos, inspired by the songwriting style of Nick Cave.

"We wanted to make a much more dynamic album," Holley explains. "When I listen back to *I'm Not Well* I think there's a lot of immaturity with how it fits sonically. There are tracks on the new album which are just straight-up pop or rock tracks, but then we've got a few tracks which I think sit more between."

It all started in Exeter.

A shy kid who loved nature and animals, Holley grew up in beautiful surroundings outside Exeter. Music became his form of release, through listening to Neil Young and Beatles records before he joined his first band, a ska group called, rather

emo-tastically, Salt In Open Wounds, when he was just 12.

"I hated ska, but I kind of landed in that," he says, laughing, "and then a pop-punk band when I was sixteen. We were doing gigs, touring, and I loved doing that so I stuck with it."

Cutting his teeth in those bands gave him a resilience he's now thankful for. "It felt quite like a punk-rock upbringing," he says. "Some of these pubs that we went to were absolute dives."

They're young, but they've paid their dues.

The three musicians in Black Foxxes put in plenty of hours before forming the band in 2014. Between them, they've played in alternative, pop-punk and extreme metal bands, and Holley has played in clubs and pubs since he was 13. This DIY 'punk' ethic has carried through to today.

"We don't let other people dictate where this band will go, where so many bands do," Holley reasons. "So many bands that start when they're sixteen, seventeen, get famous and get swept into this industry that can be fickle and ruthless."

Travel cures all.

When asked what's helped him deal with his problems (medication aside), Holley replies: "One hundred per cent, travelling. My biggest struggle now is actually just being at home. I feel easiest when I'm travelling, meeting new people and seeing new cultures. I spent so many years of my life being ill, where I didn't actually do anything like that, so I'm making up for it now." 

Reiði is out now via Spinefarm. Black Foxxes play the Download Festival on June 8-10.



Deep Purple MkII: (l-r)
Jon Lord, Roger Glover,
Ritchie Blackmore,
Ian Gillan, Ian Paice.

PURPLE REIGN

One band, with its sprawling family tree of members past and present, shaped the sound and look of the golden age of classic rock more than any other: **Deep Purple.**

Words: **Paul Rees**



The cover shot for first album *Shades Of Deep Purple*: (l-r) Rod Evans (front) Nick Simper, Jon Lord, Ian Paice, Ritchie Blackmore.

“The guiding force of the band is: ‘We’re going to do what we f*ing want and that’s the end of it.’”**

Roger Glover

CVs peaked at a joint tenure in a jobbing band, Episode Six, that had recorded a handful of singles, all of which had sunk without trace. From these seeds, Purple blossomed, their roots extending out across and re-shaping the landscape of hard rock for decades to come.

Deep Purple MkII, as this Gillan-fronted line-up came to be known, went on to make a series of landmark records: 1970’s *In Rock* and *Machine Head* and *Made In Japan*, both from 1972, principal among them. Along the way they also crafted what is arguably the most recognisable song – and especially its riff – of that era: *Smoke On The Water*.

When the MkII line-up came apart – always likely, given five such strong personalities, and Blackmore especially a ticking time bomb in any group situation – Purple soldiered on. To

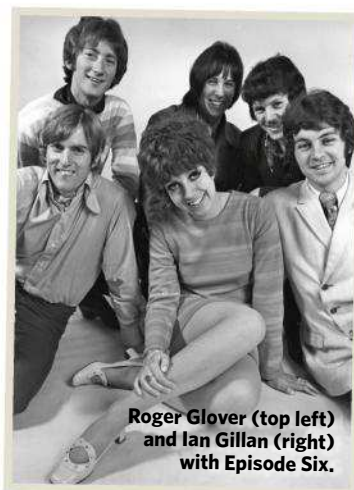
replace the departed Gillan and Glover, they found two more star turns in David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes, a bassist who could also sing like an angel. During 1974, this MkIII version of Purple settled into a soulful, blues-rock stride and released two excellent albums, *Burn* and *Stormbringer*, yielding two more classic tunes, *Burn* and *Mistreated*, that joined the catalogue of other now enduring rock standards Purple recorded: *Black Night*, *Strange Kind Of Woman*, *Speed King*, *Highway Star*, *Child In Time*, *Woman From Tokyo* and on and on. The just-as combustible Mk III line-up barely made it into 1975, but its messy end proved to be the opening salvos of the bigger Purple campaign.

After their time in Purple, and pre the MkII version gathering again in 1984 to make the *Perfect Strangers* album, various members managed the unprecedented feat of launching three separate bands that had great success in their own right: Blackmore with Rainbow (which later included Glover); Gillan with his own eponymously named group; Coverdale with Whitesnake, where he was joined for spells by both Lord and Paice, and away from them reinvented what was a very British institution as something more trans-Atlantic for the eight-million-plus-selling album 1987. In addition, Elf, an American band signed to Purple Records, the group’s vanity label, had been fronted by Ronnie James Dio, yet another of hard rock’s giant voices, who would subsequently, and with distinction, front Blackmore’s Rainbow, Black Sabbath and his own band, Dio.

Measured by scope and influence, from this headiest of periods only Sabbath and Led Zeppelin stand alongside Purple. Even now, and taking into account the heights scaled solo by Ozzy Osbourne and Robert Plant, Purple’s collective achievements are unparalleled. In terms of staking out how the golden age of classic hard rock looked, sounded and will be remembered in perpetuity, the single biggest imprint is theirs.

Not that you’ll hear Ian Gillan, for one, shouting too loudly about it.

“It’s hard to be objective about something like that,” he considers. “With Purple it’s easier to reverse-engineer the situation. If you take the influences of Jon Lord, Ritchie, Roger, Ian Paice and me during our formative years, those ingredients were all coming together at the same time: Beethoven and Chopin, Buddy Rich, Chuck Berry, ➤



Roger Glover (top left) and Ian Gillan (right) with Episode Six.



High-flying Purple in March '74

Little Richard, Woody Guthrie, Chet Atkins and more. It's unbelievable, really, but like a sponge we soaked up all of these things from our different backgrounds and all together found our voices. To me, the chemistry we had in Purple became quite diluted afterwards. But maybe that's being too picky."

Glover, Gillan's co-writer starting from their Episode Six days and for so long now the apparent straightforward yin to his more complicated yang, offers a blunter assessment: "In Purple, we've never had any pressure from anyone to do anything," he insists. "Apart from the old management back in 1970 claiming that *In Rock* didn't have a single; we went back in the studio, got drunk and did *Black Night*. That aside, the guiding force of the band that always seems to have prevailed is: 'We're going to do what we fucking want and that's the end of it.'"

Purple MKII started their journey together at a serendipitous point in pop culture. Countless British teenagers at that time were turned on to music first by Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Chuck Berry and the battalions of American rock'n'rollers, and then by the more attainable-seeming home-grown artists and music such as Lonnie Donegan and skiffle and Cliff Richard. And The Shadows. Gillan, Blackmore, Lord, Paice and Glover were no exception to this general rule, and they also gravitated to covers bands. This status quo lasted up until the moment in

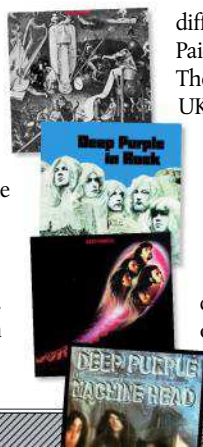


1964 when Beatles manager Brian Epstein convinced Paul McCartney and John Lennon to try their hand at songwriting, after which a revolution was sparked.

Hot on the heels of The Beatles' act of self-creation, the Rolling Stones, The Kinks and The Who all burst out of soon-to-be-Swinging London, charting their own distinctive courses. And when from across the Atlantic Bob Dylan and Brian Wilson conjured up such long-playing masterpieces as *Highway 61 Revisited* and the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*, rock became an art form to get properly serious about. By 1968, Jimi Hendrix and Cream had stirred harder, more explosive brews into the pot, and it was as this momentous wave was cresting that Purple, and also Sabbath and Zeppelin, came into being.

"Look at all the attempts by powerful music biz people to form a supergroup. It never worked."

Ian Gillan



"At a stroke, we went from this very structured way of doing music to a completely different way of looking at it," says Ian Paice. "All of a sudden the tethers were off. There was a generation of kids from the UK who had played so many shows in such a short amount of time that they had got really very, very good, and there was so much more they could say than with just a pop single."

Like all truly great bands, Purple MKII was made up of a bunch of disparate characters, each with their own particular strengths, but with the

1975's *Come Taste the Band-flavoured Purple*: David Coverdale, Ian Paice, Jon Lord, Tommy Bolin, Glenn Hughes.



whole being so much more than the sum of its parts. The fizzing chemical reaction that occurred between the five of them was magic bottled.

"Like any group or team, you do better in a kind of mongrel outfit that's naturally gravitated to each other," offers Gillan. "Look at all the attempts by powerful people in what used to be called the music business to form a supergroup. It never worked. And that's because it was never organic; these things happen naturally."

"I had never worked with anyone like I did with these guys. It was jamming all day long. At the end of which they would say to me: 'That'll do. Now go and write a song over that.' I would write the words and a tune with Roger over what was basically an instrumental. It was like being let out of prison. There was so much joy and freedom, and of course these guys were masters of their instruments. The same as you and I can hold a conversation, that was the back and forth that they had between each other. And I had naivety, youth and disillusionment on my side, I suppose."

This sense of having been given their musical wings, something also referenced by Glover and Paice, is doubtless crucial to Purple's extraordinary nature. After they had left the band, it kept the former members questing and moving forward, to Rainbow, Whitesnake and Gillan. Prior to joining Whitesnake, Lord and Paice formed Paice-Ashton-Lord, while Glenn Hughes joined guitarist Pat Thrall in Hughes-Thrall and also had stints ➤

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DP today: (l-r) Roger Glover, Steve Morse, Ian Gillan, Don Airey and Ian Paice.

fronting both Sabbath and Gary Moore's band. None of these ventures lasted long or could be said to have been wholly successful, but they had their moments.

The epitome of Purple's can-do spirit was shown by Glover in 1974 when he made *The Butterfly Ball And The Grasshopper's Feast*. A flawed but fascinating curio, it was a concept album based on a children's poem, and featured appearances by Coverdale, Dio, Hughes and a full orchestra. Glover continued to forge a solid production career, working on albums by the Ian Gillan Band, Coverdale, Nazareth and, in '79, Rainbow's *Down To Earth*, for which he also joined Blackmore's band. He remained their bassist for five years.

Seemingly there were no boundaries put up within Purple either. As early as 1969, Lord was composing his *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*, which gave rise to a trailblazing collaboration with conductor Michael Arnold and the London Philharmonic staged at the Royal Albert Hall on September 24 of that year. The following year, Gillan voiced Jesus on the album version of hit rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*. By 1974 the band's management had created Purple Records, the imprint on which they released their own albums and also, among others, Dio's *Elf*, British proto-glam rockers Silverhead and a 1972 novelty single, *Who Is The Doctor?*, on which the third Time Lord from TV's *Doctor Who*, Jon Pertwee, performed a spoken-word piece over the show's theme tune.

"These things just happened. But the group was the focus and centre of everything," maintains Gillan. "I don't think anyone was too happy about Jon's *Concerto* I mean, it wasn't until 1999 that I really understood what he was getting at. The rest of us took a back seat on that and none of us recognised at the time the masterpiece of his conflict between group and orchestra.

"I wasn't involved in Purple Records at all, and none of the others cared one way or another about *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I don't even think they knew about it until it was released a year later."

In the immediate aftermath of Lord's *Concerto*, Deep Purple truly took flight. MkII's imperious phase lasted from *In Rock* to 1973's *Who Do We Think We Are*. Even when Blackmore bailed from the MkIII incarnation and Tommy Bolin took over on

guitar, they had another worthy album left in them, the looser-limbed *Come Taste the Band* (1975). That made it seven bold, vaulting albums on the spin, before the band crashed and burned after a wretched gig at Liverpool's Empire Theatre on March 15, 1976.

"Boarding the good ship Purple, I learned what to do and also what *not* to do in one of the greatest bands of our time," reflects Hughes, who by 1976 had spun off the rails into a ruinous cocaine addiction that he wouldn't beat until the dawning of the 90s. "It all made me who I am today."

"You can learn everything," says Gillan, "you can do your apprenticeship and pay your dues, but the one thing that nobody can teach you, and that you can't prepare for, is success. That's something you just can't deal with when you're that young."

"In Purple, I learned what to do and also what *not* to do in one of the greatest bands of our time."

— Glenn Hughes —

meandering career paths running parallel to each other. In the form of Rainbow's *Rising* ('76), Whitesnake's *Ready An' Willing* ('80) and *Future Shock* by Gillan ('81) they served up a run of albums strong and powerful enough to stand away from Purple's looming shadow.

"You couldn't avoid there being a sense of competition between us all," Gillan admits. "It was there all the time. Much as I thought Rainbow was amazing, that was the direction Ritchie had wanted to push Purple into and more of a pop-rock type. It seemed to me more worked out, less exciting and dangerous, although the music was great.

"He asked me a couple of times to join Rainbow, but it just wasn't my kind of thing. I said to him: 'Well, there might also be a vacancy in my band.'

"And he did play with us a couple of



The Purple legacy: Blackmore (right) with Ronnie James Dio in Rainbow.



times, at the Marquee and the Rainbow Theatre, but nothing ever came of it. We were on divergent courses."

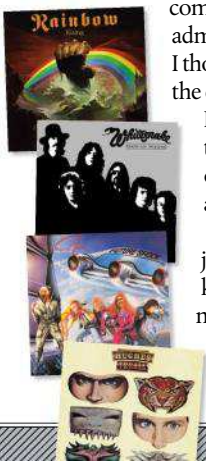
Of course, those paths eventually crossed again in 1984. And while Blackmore hasn't stayed the course, once more against the odds Purple have kept on going. Along the way, recognition of their unique, immense stature has grown. Belatedly, in 2016 Purple were inducted into the Rock

And Roll Hall Of Fame by Lars Ulrich, 10 years after Sabbath, 21 after Zeppelin and too late for Jon Lord, who died of cancer in 2012. Coverdale and Hughes have each gone back to the roots to find inspiration and, perhaps more pertinently, a guaranteed audience. In 2015, Coverdale released an album of Purple covers, *The Purple Album*, under the Whitesnake banner. Evidently undeterred by the scathing reviews that received, Hughes brings his Classic Deep Purple Live tour to the UK this year.

As for Deep Purple, the current incarnation of the band will be on the road until this summer on their *Long Goodbye* tour. Drummed up in advance as a likely final bow, it now looks to be but another chapter in one of rock's greatest sagas.

"We were all pretty ill a couple of years ago," says Gillan. "Ian had a stroke, Jon wasn't well, and it was suggested to us that we call it a day. We supposed it had to end sooner or later. But we're all feeling better now. I get the impression everyone's up for another album, although that wasn't the case last year.

"That growing appreciation of our influence is something that's been mentioned in recent years. It's not something we dwell on ourselves. Although we play a lot of music, we don't talk about it too much together. A few years ago, we were in Warsaw the night before the first show of a tour. Everyone flew in from different corners and we all ambled into the bar. There were a couple of hours of 'How's the family doing?' 'How's the dog?' and all that crap. Getting into the lift and going up to bed, I suddenly realised that not a single mention had been made of music or the show the next day. It was just a bunch of mates having a chat. It was chaotic, to be honest. But that's how I like it. That sense of spontaneity, that's how it's stayed special all these years." 🍇



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At the shoot for the inner sleeve photo for 1976's *Rainbow Rising*: (l-r) Cozy Powell Jimmy Bain Ronnie Dio, Tony Carey, Ritchie Blackmore.



DIO & RAINBOW

Had Ritchie Blackmore not left Deep Purple, we would never have had one of its greatest offshoots, and might never have become aware of one of the greatest singers in rock.

Words: **Mick Wall**

The godfathers of so much that excelled about British rock in the decade that followed their original 1976 demise – Gillan, Whitesnake, Rainbow, Black Sabbath – perhaps the greatest gift Deep Purple bequeathed the world was to help bring forth the exquisite talent and indomitable spirit of American singer Ronnie James Dio.

Before Ritchie Blackmore worked with Ronnie Dio, the guitarist had envisaged what eventually became the first Rainbow album as little more than a side project; a one-off solo escapade inspired by

Purple's rejection of a new Blackmore piece he titled *16th Century Greensleeves* – the kind of stomping pomp-rock hauteur that Purple had once considered their music fortress, but now, in the wake of the white-soul groove Glenn Hughes and David Coverdale were more keen on exploring, was distinctly old hat.

As Blackmore said in 1983: "I left because I'd met up with Ronnie Dio, and he was so easy to work with. He was originally just going to do one track of a solo LP, but we ended up doing the whole LP in three weeks, which I was very excited about."

Or as Dio would later put it: "I was always a dreamer type of kid. I immersed myself into fantasy situations by reading science fiction and things that would let my imagination run somewhere. I think there's a tremendous kinship between science fiction and the mythological era, and I applied all of that to my lyrics."

Well he did after joining up with Blackmore, anyway. Before that, Ronnie Dio occupied a lot of different musical spaces – and times.

The only child of a poor immigrant Italian family, Ronald James Padavona was born in



Elf in November 1974 on a US tour supporting Deep Purple.



Ronnie Dio (left) with Elf circa 1972.

Upstate New York on July 10, 1942 – although for most of his career he insisted he'd been born in 1949. As the newly installed frontman of Rainbow, he may have been ballsy enough to stand in front of thousands and conduct musical lightning, but Dio the fledgling rock star didn't like Rainbow fans knowing he was already 33 by the time he'd been given the opportunity to do so.

Mainly it came down to respect, such a vital component in the self-esteem of Italian-American culture. Ronnie Dio was a man with impeccable manners, generous with his time, funny and kind. Unless you showed him disrespect. He never forgave Ritchie Blackmore for not giving him equal billing in Rainbow. Still furious years later, he told me how "when we first got together it was agreed the group would be called Ritchie Blackmore And Ronnie James Dio's Rainbow. But when the first album came out, there it was: 'Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow!' What was that about?"

Raised as a Roman Catholic, Ronnie James Padavona's real religion was music. He had already learned to play bass, piano and trumpet long before he knew he could sing, and joined his first band, the Vegas Kings when he was 15. Showing the same gritty determination to lead by example that would characterise his whole career, he'd soon swapped the bass for a microphone as the group metamorphosed into first Ronnie & The Ramblers and then Ronnie And The Red Caps; hit YouTube and you can still find young Ronnie fly-me-to-the-moon-ing in tux and bow tie.

There was no denying that incredible voice, though. Singing just came naturally. "Unlike learning to play an instrument, it just seemed to be something that was there immediately," he told me, "a gift". Playing the trumpet gave him an edge, he recalled. "Partly to do with knowing how to breathe, partly to do with the fact that the trumpet has its own voice, its own way of phrasing."

By the late 60s he'd also changed his name, after a notorious mafia figure, Johnny Dio, "because it sounded cool", the band becoming Ronnie Dio And The Prophets. It wasn't until '67 and the summer of love that he grew his hair, stopped shaving, started smoking dope and formed his first rock band, the Electric Elves – later shrunk to Elf.

On stage Dio would stand there banging a cowbell, the band pulling out all the stops with covers of *Black Dog*, *War Pigs*, *Aqualung*... or when the mood took them and the audience demanded hits, he'd give them Lennon's *Imagine*, The Beatles'

Can't Buy Me Love... anything to keep the party going and the paid gigs coming in. Until the band began writing their own stuff.

"It was the first band we had which tried to make it with its own original material," Dio told me. It was also the first time the singer really got noticed, when Elf was signed to a new record label formed by English rock goliaths Deep Purple. Ian Paice and Roger Glover produced Elf's first, eponymously titled album, and in 1974 they were invited to support Purple on a US tour.

So far, so good. What's less known is how much closer – in loose-hipped style – Elf were to original good-time Gillan-era Purple than to the kind of medieval metal of Dio-era Rainbow.

"The kind of songs I wrote in Rainbow all had a more Renaissance-style aspect to them," Ronnie would tell me. "Ritchie and I had always seen Rainbow as being musically a meeting between heavy rock and heavy classical sorts of themes. What I wrote wasn't poetry, but it was written to say something more than 'Baby I love you'."

"Ronnie was originally just going to do one track of a solo LP, but we ended up doing the whole LP in three weeks."

Ritchie Blackmore

Listening to tracks like *Self Portrait* from their 1975 debut *Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow*, you could hardly argue with that. Described by Blackmore as like "a cross between Bach's *Jesu, Joy Of Man's Desire* and Hendrix's *Manic Depression*", Dio clearly means it when he sings lines like, 'Paint me a picture of eyes that never see/With flashes of lightning that burn for only me'.

Contrast that, though, with *Black Swampy Water*, the opening track of the third and final Elf album, *Trying To Burn The Sun*, released the same year: 'Uh, back in the wood/Where it's good/Well I saw me a child/She was wild/Like a lady going all out.' This was set to a good-timey Stones/Faces barrelhouse

groove. It's a great, fun track, actually, well sung, well played, but about as far from Bach as Turner and his *Overdrive*.

Yet it was Elf – minus guitarist Steve Edwards – that Blackmore co-opted to play on that first album. Indeed you can hear the Elf steamroller going full pelt on classic Rainbow tracks like *Man On The Silver Mountain*, and you can hear how

much wiser-time soul they injected into the dreamy *Catch The Rainbow*. But that was Ronnie Dio. Someone who'd learned to roll with the punches and always knew exactly what he was doing.

Doug Thaler was the keyboard player in the Electric Elves from '67 until a car crash in '71 that left guitarist Nick Pantas dead and Thaler in hospital for months. He recalls a pre-fame Dio as "someone who was always very driven. He had been trying for success for a lot of years before he finally got his break with Rainbow. By the time Elf got their deal with the Purple label, Ronnie had already released half a dozen singles on half a dozen labels. He was very frustrated. I think he was worried he'd missed his chance." ➤



The Dio-fronted Rainbow in 1976.

PURPLE REIGN

Ronnie Dio: small in stature but with a voice as big as they come.



Dio with Black Sabbath on the *Mob Rules* tour of 1981: Tony Iommi, Vinny Appice, Dio, Geezer Butler.

Thaler confirms that it was only after Dio began working with Blackmore that he developed his penchant for writing about there being 'no sun in the shadow of the wizard', as he did on Rainbow classics like *Stargazer*. "He only became a heavy metal guy after he'd spent time touring with Purple and started in with Rainbow. But Ronnie was a great guy. He was one of those people that if he met you in a club he'd remember your name for the rest of his life. He was a great guy to hang out with, a guy's guy."

On stage, Dio took the same highly personal approach to building his relationship with the audience.

As he told me: "When I stand on stage and sing, I like to imagine I'm looking into the eyes of every single person in the audience, that I'm singing specifically for them. And when I'm introducing a song, I never shout, I simply speak to them as though we were having a private conversation. Partly, it's because I've always hated frontmen that simply shout and leer at an audience, treating them as though they were one big blob. I've always thought that was so rude. And mainly it's because I take what I do very seriously. Don't get me wrong, I like to have fun up there. But I really do mean every word I sing or say. And I want people to know that."

It was the second Rainbow album, though, *Rainbow Rising*, that catapulted the band into the

annals of rock history. Released in 1976, just weeks after MkIII Purple's final show in April, and featuring what is now considered the quintessential Rainbow line-up – all Dio's former Elf sidemen replaced by rock veterans, drummer Cozy Powell, bassist Jimmy Bain and keyboard player Tony Carey – *Rainbow Rising* set the benchmark by which heavy metal albums would be judged throughout the rest of the 70s.

Certainly it was one of the best albums Dio would ever sing on. "Yeah, I'd agree with that," he said nonchalantly. Unfortunately, with the line-up fracturing again (neither Bain nor Carey survived the cull) before the recording of a follow-up could begin, the band's potential was never fully explored.

"It was a shame, but that's the way Ritchie liked to work, in order to keep things fresh," Dio told me, straight-faced. Then once the tape recorder was turned off, what "an asshole" Ritchie was.

"People still tell me how surprised they were when I left the band shortly after. The truth is, I was kinda surprised myself," Dio joked years later. As he confessed: "Ultimately, it was Ritchie's choice, yes. But it was also mine, in that I knew I couldn't give him what he wanted. The answer lies in what the band did after I left, which was singles like

Since You've Been Gone. It's a great song and it was a big hit for them, but it's not one I would have written or sung with them. It was mainstream pop-rock, and that's where Ritchie wanted to go. If I'd wanted to go there too, then I'm sure we could have continued working together. But I didn't."

The irony: that a straightforward, chorus-heavy rock'n'roll belter like *Since You've Been Gone* would have fitted 'whoa-yeah-mama'-era Elf like a velvet glove wrapped around an iron fist. Yet another strand of the Deep Purple family circle left to tantalise the 'What if...' brigade. ❶

"What I wrote wasn't poetry, but it was written to say something more than 'Baby I love you'."

Ronnie Dio

Rod Evans fronting Captain Beyond in London in May 1972.

CAPTAIN BEYOND

In 1969, after three semi-successful albums and one certifiable hit (*Hush*), Deep Purple's chief architects Ritchie Blackmore and Jon Lord decided that their singer, the handsome, impulsive and tempestuous Rod Evans, had run his course. The band decided they wanted to go in a heavier direction; Evans did not fit the bill, and was unceremoniously dumped. The irony is that he immediately joined a band far heavier than Deep Purple would ever be.

Captain Beyond formed in the wake of US band Iron Butterfly's disintegration. Butterfly's frontman, Doug Ingle left, leaving guitarist Larry 'Rhino' Reinhardt and bassist Lee Dorman flapping in the breeze. Rhino brought in his drummer pal Bobby Caldwell, and in 1970 Captain Beyond was born, Evans joining their psycho circus soon after.

To call Captain Beyond heavy was a huge understatement. They were the fucking heaviest thing around. Although it took two years to release, their 1972 self-titled debut is one of proto-metal's undisputed masterpieces, a mesmerizing clash of skull-crushing aggression and trippy, drug-fuelled space rock. Anchored by thunderous opener *Dancing Madly Backwards (On A Sea Of Air)*, the album could've, should've established the band as true heavy rock pioneers.

Unfortunately their fragile chemistry was fraught with peril from the beginning, and they veered wildly from one direction to another, resulting in a short and patchy career in which they never gelled musically or sold enough records to matter much in the high-stakes world of early-70s hard rock. Evans had quit the band four times before that debut was even released, and after their second album. 1973's bizarrely Latin-tinged *Sufficiently Breathless* fizzled and flopped he left the band – and the music business – forever.

With Willie Daffern in his place they released one last album, the wild, space-streaking return-to-form *Dawn Explosion*, in 1977, but it got lost in a sea of disco and punk.

Decades later, Evans's work in Captain Beyond finally got the recognition it deserved, and their first album is a staple in the diet of every stoner rock band that has ever existed. **KM**



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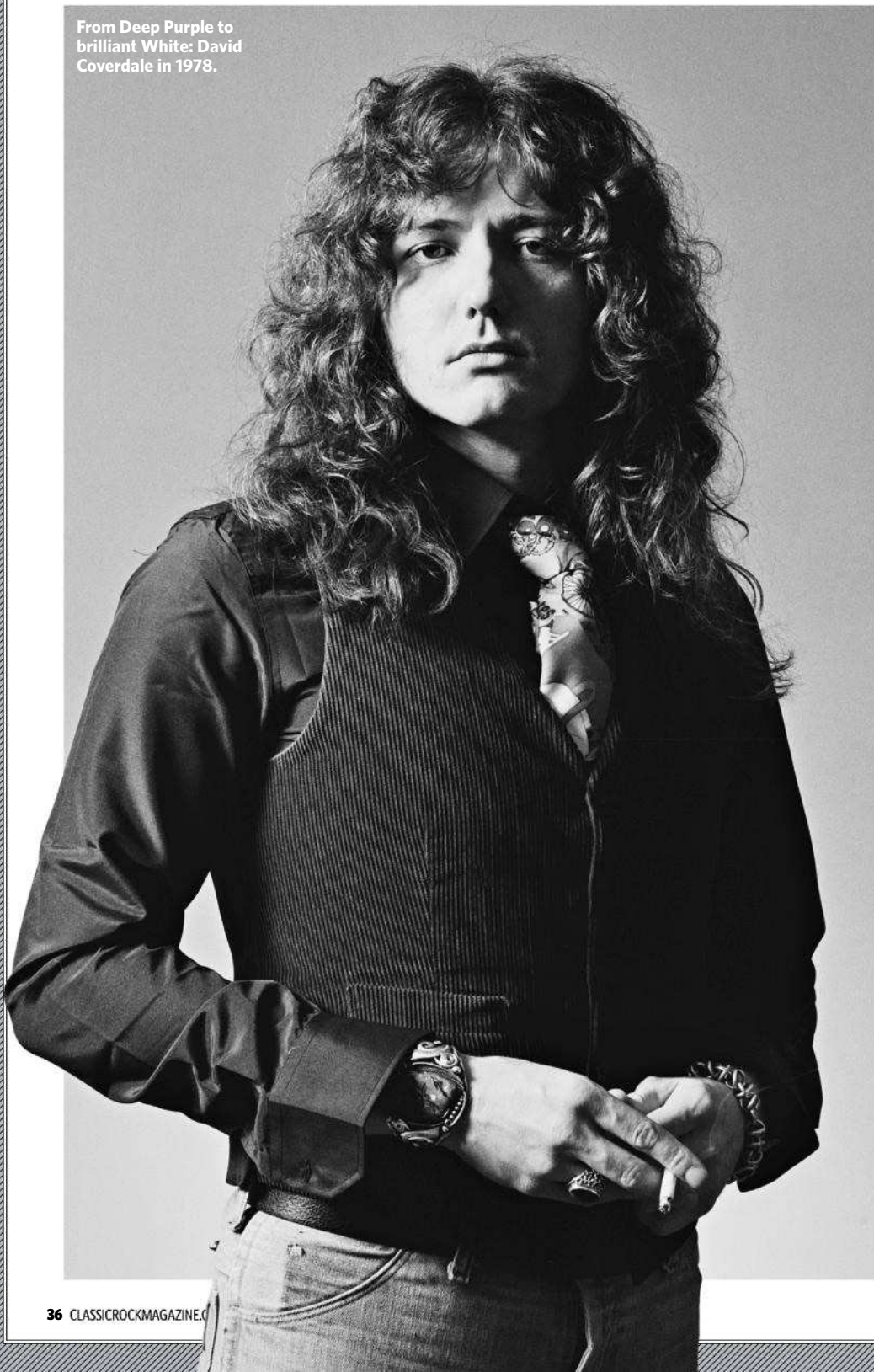
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COVERDALE & WHITESNAKE

Pissed off with Purple, David Coverdale decided to jump ship and go solo. After two disappointing albums he returned to being in a band – this time his own. Whitesnake would become a monster.

Words: **Mick Wall**

From Deep Purple to brilliant White: David Coverdale in 1978.



In the summer of 1976, David Coverdale was in for a rude awakening. Having walked out on an already shattered Deep Purple in March – sick of Bolin's runaway heroin habit, freaked by Hughes's week-long coke binges, fed-up with standing in the side-stage shadows as "various members went through their widdly-diddly-widdly solos" – he understandably decided now was the time at last to do his own thing.

With Purple, he said at the time: "It got to the point of walking into a hotel room and complaining because it wasn't a suite or because there wasn't a double bed. Yeah, me, I did that. That's fucking ridiculous. Whatever you've been through you couldn't know about that. The whims you inflict on others. Not even Prince Charles should have those rights over other people"

There were only two things now standing in his way and, frustratingly for Coverdale, he was not aware of either of them until it was almost too late.

The first was a change in the musical zeitgeist that saw dinosaur-sized rock suddenly consigned to the rubbish heap as a new dick in town called punk turned the world of giant stars such as Purple, Zeppelin, Sabbath and Floyd upside-down. Coverdale was only 24 in the summer of 1976, nearly a year older than Joe Strummer, singer of coming punk legends The Clash – yet a million miles apart in terms of the new safety-pinned-credibility. He thought the world was just waiting for a solo record from an ex-Deep Purple star. He thought wrong.

The other thing holding Coverdale back was the fact that what he did best was exactly what he had been doing in Deep Purple: the lion's mane voice, the thrusting bulge in his loon pants, backed by the guitars on fire, the blaspheming church organ and the rolling-thunder drums. Whatever he did now as a solo artist would have to be at least as good as his best work with Purple – *Burn*, *Mistreated*, *Stormbringer* – or it would have to be something... well, different.

Coverdale tried to do both. That is, keep the grinding bombast of Purple, but in the context of a new, more 'mature' musical setting that would find him looking to equally impress fans of more laid-back and rootsy contemporaries like Little Feat, Robert Palmer and Terry Reid. Cool and sashaying, where before he had merely strutted and preened.

Hence the strange confection of highs and lows that constituted the first Coverdale solo album, *White Snake*, recorded in London in August 1976, just a month after the official announcement of

GETTY

Purple's split was made in the press, but not released until April 1977.

It started off well, with *Lady*, the title 'lady' in mid-70s rock parlance being the nomenclature for a certain type of 'experienced' female friend of the band with, as Coverdale growls, 'cocaine eyes' and 'a rose in her hair' who dances 'like Salomé'. All very latter-day Bolin-era Purple, with added horns (pun intended).

It's the next track, *Blind Man*, that offers up the biggest clue as to the true musical identity Coverdale was to forge more successfully in the coming years, once he'd got all this solo-singer stuff out of his gypsy-brained system. Like early Free, poignant and elegiac, building to something more anthemic and inclusive, *Blind Man* delineated the musical space Coverdale would return to again and again, in *Here I Go Again*, in *Crying In The Rain*, in *Love Ain't No Stranger*... all variations on a theme, lyrically, musically.

The rest of the album weaved between the two, dropping in temperature only when obvious filler was added, like *Goldie's Place*, and *Hole In The Sky* – you can almost see the gospel choir moving from foot to foot making big 'ooh's' with their mouths.

By the time *White Snake* was released, an impatient, contractually obliged Coverdale had already recorded its follow-up, *Northwinds*. Unable to anticipate the lukewarm reaction that awaited *White Snake*, he pushed the boat out further this time, reaching for more earnest singer-songwriter status, composing on the piano. But on the deep, introspective ballads he delivered – like the six-minute, please-shoot-me title track and the well-meaning but God-help-us-dreary *Give Me Kindness* – he sounded more Elkie Brooks and Leo Sayer than the Joe Cocker-meets-early Elton John he was presumably aiming for.

Predictably, neither solo album sold well. There were no demands for a solo tour, not here in the UK and certainly not from America or much anywhere else. Purple fans pooh-poohed them. Punk fans didn't even know they existed. With so many former Purple people now releasing 'solo' records – Gillan, Blackmore, Hughes, Lord and Paice, even Bolin squeezed out a solo 'sensation' before he overdosed and died – two more made very little difference.

And that's when David – no longer the 'Dave' of his pre-fame days – had his light-bulb moment: when he joined the words 'White' and 'Snake' together and put together a band of almost-equals to help him tunnel his way back to the commercial surface.

There was a toe-dip with the four-track EP *Snakebite* in June 1978, and straight away Coverdale knew he was in business again. Where the solo albums had been recorded with sessions players, Whitesnake would be a five-man outfit featuring former Juicy Lucy and Snafu guitarist Micky Moody, who had been his co-writer on the solo albums, now joined by ex-Cozy Powell's Hammer and Babe Ruth guitarist Bernie Marsden, who would overtake Moody as Coverdale's most effective new songwriting partner. Along with one-time Colosseum II bassist Neil Murray and former Streetwalkers drummer Dave



The line-up that recorded the first two Whitesnake albums: (l-r) Neil Murray, Bernie Marsden, Coverdale, Mick Moody, John Lord, Dave Dowle.

Dowle, Coverdale now had a powerful touring band he could focus on providing material to play live, without over-thinking a solo career.

Strange to relate now, when we consider the super-confident, charming gentleman rocker we would come to recognise in the 80s and 90s, but Coverdale found those early Whitesnake days absolutely nerve-racking. He was no longer one of five as he had been in Purple, now he was the band leader – with his whole future riding on the outcome.

"Why do I die a thousand deaths like this before I go on?" he would say before going on stage each night on the first Whitesnake tour. "Why the hell do I put myself through this?"

The answer, as he later recalled for me, "was because the people that showed up at those early shows really made me feel welcome, like I was really wanted again. I would go on each night thinking nobody cared any more. Then before the first number was over I'd be myself again. Like I'd come home, right there, on stage. It felt amazing to be back."

When just four months later the first Whitesnake album, *Trouble*, was released, it was another patchy effort but far more lovable. The

twinkle was back in Coverdale's eye on tracks like *Lie Down* (A Modern Love Song) and the impossible-to-resist title track. He could still write personal songs – *Nighthawk* was about his beloved mother, who used to order him to roll up his shirt sleeves to check for needle marks when he came back from touring with Purple – but he was also back to pumping out movers and groovers like *Love To Keep*

You Warm and Steal Away.

Musically this was still more Free and Bad Co. than Purple or Zeppelin, but no one was complaining as *Trouble* nudged its way into the UK Top 50.

By the time the band released their third, more-of-the-same-but-better album, *Ready An' Willing*,

in the summer of 1980, Whitesnake were good enough to have a hit single, with the Coverdale-Moody-Marsden classic *Fool For Your Loving*.

Early on, Coverdale had also added to the set a cover version of Bobby 'Blue' Bland's signature song, *Ain't No Love In The Heart Of The City*. On the surface an unlikely anthem-in-the-making for a balls-out band like Whitesnake, it became the highlight of the show, right alongside *Mistreated* and *Fool For Your Loving*.

"The first time I stopped the band playing so I could hear the audience signing it, I wasn't sure if it was going to work," Coverdale later told me. "I could hear people singing, but it wasn't until I told the band to bottle it and the audience took over that I even knew they knew the words. I came off that night and the tingles were still going up and down my spine. That's when I knew I had a life after Purple. That I still had a future."

By then Coverdale had even enticed both Jon Lord and Ian Paice into the band as Whitesnake settled into a pleasing blues-rock shuffle that would continue to warm the cockles of old-school rockers' hearts for the rest of time. Right? ☛

"The people that showed up at those early Whitesnake shows made me feel like I was really wanted again."



Whitesnake at London's Rainbow Theatre, March 1981: (l-r) Jon Lord, Bernie Marsden, David Coverdale, Ian Paice.



Early-80s Gillan: (l-r) Mick Underwood, Bernie Tormé, Ian Gillan, John McCoy, Colin Townes.

IAN GILLAN

Post-Purple, the singer-songwriter scored some hits as the captain of his self-named bands, but it became clear that the game was over when he was tackled by football legend Rodney Marsh.

Words: **Paul Rees**

The first of Purple's Mk II line-up to leave the band in the summer of 1973, Ian Gillan initially retired from performing and went into business. Among other ventures, he opened a country hotel and took over a recording studio. However, encouraged by his last-minute guest appearance at Roger Glover's Butterfly Ball show at the Royal Albert Hall on October 16, 1975, Gillan went into his own studio the very next week to write songs, intent on putting a band together.

Initially this took the form of the Ian Gillan Band, with the frontman along with guitarist Ray Fenwick, keyboard player Mike Moran, future Roxy Music bassist John Gustafson and Mark Nauseef who had previously played drums with Ronnie Dio in Elf. In early 1976, this line-up recorded their debut album, *Child in Time*, with Glover producing. A jazz-rock fusion blend, its appeal was selective. Likewise the follow-up, *Clear Air Turbulence* in 1977, by which time Colin Townes had replaced Moran, and *Scarabus* later the same year. The latter record proved their swansong.

"Colin brought along a song called *Fighting Man*. The others all

doubled up laughing at it, while I thought it was pretty good," recalls Gillan. "They point-blank refused to give it a shot, at which point I left my own band."

Taking Colin Townes with him, Gillan assembled another five-piece group and opted for the more concise moniker of Gillan. The band's self-titled debut of 1978 was nothing more than a trial run. Within a year, the singer had changed tack again, bringing in his old Episode Six drummer Mick

Underwood and young, punky and dexterous guitarist Bernie Tormé and going for a more direct, punchier but still free-spirited sound that at its best brought to mind nothing so much as an update on vintage Purple.

A couple of cracking records followed: *Glory Road* ('80) and *Future Shock* ('81), their respective standout tracks being the splenetic burst *Running*, *White Face*, *City Boy* and the dizzying, off-kilter *No Laughing in Heaven*. Next to Blackmore's Rainbow and Coverdale's Whitesnake, Gillan the band sounded positively radical, but *Future Shock* nonetheless peaked at No.2 in the UK, and Gillan tossing his mane became a regular sight on *Top Of The Pops*.

"We didn't have any one style, but then never in my life have I really sat down and planned a record," Gillan says. "It's always been a case of going in the studio and seeing what happens. I like that approach."

The band sealed their ascent with a Saturday night headline appearance at the 1981 Reading Rock Festival. They had, though, peaked. With future Iron Maiden guitarist Janick Gers having replaced Tormé (disgruntled over money), the band released two



Come, come, come to the Sabbath... Gillan with Geezer Butler and Tony Iommi.

TOP: ADRIAN BOOTH; BOTTOM: ROSS HALEN



Born again: Gillan on stage with Black Sabbath.

**"I loved every minute
[of being in Sabbath].
It was the longest party
I'd ever been to."**

— Ian Gillan —

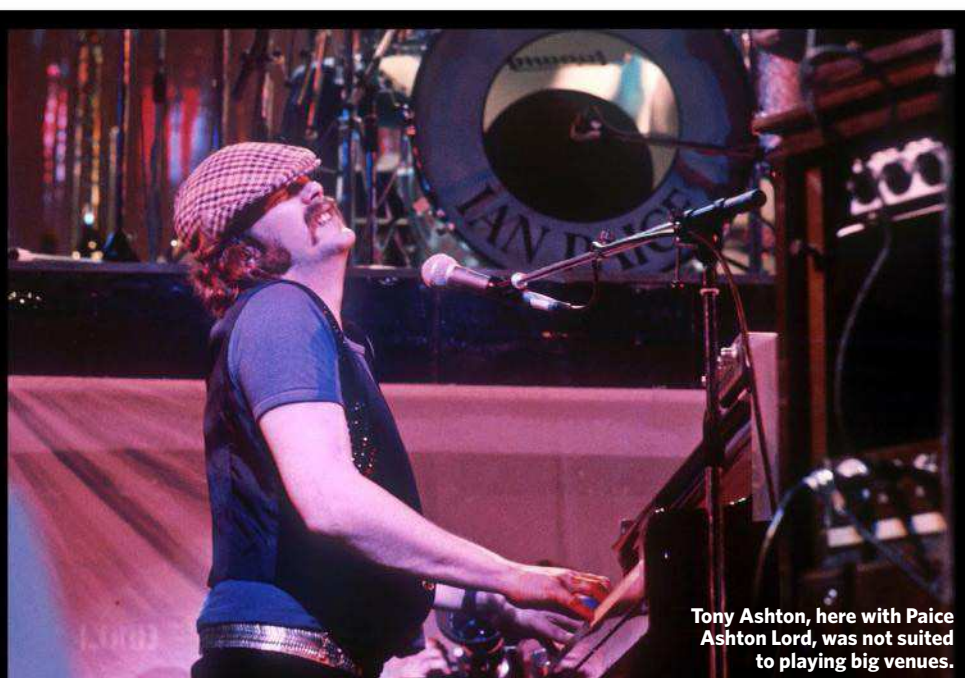
further albums – the half-live *Double Trouble*, also in 1981, and *Magic* the following year – but both were patchy and uneven.

The band's demise was an odd affair. At the end of 1982, Gillan announced he was taking a break to have surgery on his vocal cords, only to pop up a few months later as Dio's successor in Black Sabbath. His former Gillan bandmates cried foul.

"The band had already finished by then," Gillan insists now. "I was kind of self-managing, and there had been some, er, issues. I didn't enjoy it that much in the end. We had played Hammersmith Odeon, and [former Queens Park Rangers and England footballer] Rodney Marsh was there, which, being a lifelong Rangers supporter, was great for me. The two of us went out for an Indian afterwards and he said to me: 'Fantastic band, but it's not as good as Purple, is it?' And, you know, Rodney was a fan. That triggered something that fluttered around for the next two years.

"Not long after that, I got a call out of the blue from Tony Iommi. He asked me if I fancied a pint, and we met halfway at The Bear pub in Woodstock, Oxfordshire and got trashed. Next day my manager rang and said: 'If you're going to make career decisions, I think you should speak to me first.' I had no idea what he was talking about, but apparently I'd agreed to join Sabbath.

"It lasted a year. We did an album and world tour and I loved every minute of it. It was the longest party I'd ever been to. Then the Purple reunion came along and the old magic was back." 🗨️



Tony Ashton, here with Paice Ashton Lord, was not suited to playing big venues.

PAICE ASHTON LORD

Paice Ashton Lord are the neglected branch on the Purple family tree. Not surprising, given that their existence amounted to just one studio album and a handful of live gigs. But it started with the grandest of intentions.

When Deep Purple dissolved in 1976, Ian Paice and Jon Lord had two choices: they could start a soundalike band, or they could head off in a different direction entirely. "We thought: 'If we carry on doing what we'd done before, it'll be likened to Purple and it'll never be accepted properly,'" says Paice. "So we decided to do something completely different."

Ditching Purple's Hammond-driven grandeur, the pair envisaged their new endeavour as a hybrid of the blues groups, jazz outfits and big bands they had grown up listening to. The secret ingredient was singer and keyboard player Tony Ashton.

Ashton was a larger-than-life character who had long been in their orbit. His former band, Ashton, Gardner & Dyke, had shared management with Purple, and he and Lord had made 1974's *First Of The Big Bands* album together. "Tony was the life and soul of everybody's party," says Paice. "He did like a drink. But he was a wonderful bloke and never nasty with it."

The idea was to build the band around Ashton's bluesy, showboating voice and rollicking piano, bringing elements of soul and funk into the mix. Bringing in ex-Babe Ruth/future Whitesnake guitarist Bernie Marsden and session bassist Paul Martinez, they recorded their debut album, *Malice In Wonderland*, released in October 1976.

"That was a lot of fun," says Paice, "and so we did a few gigs."

That's when the problems started. Ashton was the perfect frontman in a small club, but Paice and Lord's pedigree meant the new band was booked to play bigger stages, something the singer struggled to deal with.

"Tony was only Tony when in a small club, three or four hundred people, when he was really close to them and could communicate with them," says Paice. "He was magnificent at that. On a big stage he was not a happy camper. Those shows we did were musically fine, but Tony was not in his element."

In April 1977, Paice Ashton Lord played a show at the fabled Rainbow Theatre in Finsbury Park, North London. What was supposed to be a triumphant night started in disaster when Ashton fell off the stage almost immediately and broke his leg.

"A light was in the wrong place and he went straight off into the orchestra pit," says Paice. "We dragged him out and he did the show, but he was obviously not feeling great. But that was nerves, just not wanting to be up there on that big stage."

The writing was on the wall for PAL by then. The trio began working on a second album, but they knew it wasn't going to work out.

"Jon and I looked at each other and said: 'The music's right, but we're just throwing good money after bad here,'" says Paice. "What we needed to do was not what Tony was about – we needed him to be Big Stage Tony, and he was always going to be Little Stage Tony."

Paice and Lord decided to call time on the band before they finished the second album, and the two of them eventually joined David Coverdale's Whitesnake. Ashton, meanwhile, began to step back from music, concentrating instead on a parallel career as an artist. In 1999 he was diagnosed with cancer. He died on May 28, 2001, at the age of 55.

"I saw Tony a couple of weeks before he died," says Paice. "He was very stoic about it. He knew he was going, so he had his gin and tonic by the bed and his TV, and his lovely wife Sandra there looking after him. If there is a way to go, Tony made the best of it." **DE**



The *Butterfly Ball*'s only staging, at the Royal Albert Hall. Clockwise: Twiggy; Ian Gillan and Roger Glover; David Coverdale, Glenn Hughes and John Lawton.



THE BUTTERFLY BALL AND THE GRASSHOPPER'S FEAST

When **Roger Glover** was asked to soundtrack a film based on an old children's poem, little did he know that soon it would become a live extravaganza starring Twiggy and Vincent Price.

Words: **Paul Rees**

Of all the many Purple offshoots and projects, there's none more fanciful or just plain quirky than Roger Glover's *The Butterfly Ball And The Grasshopper's Feast*. A poem for children written in 1802 by historian, art collector, botanist, sometime MP and occasional writer William Roscoe, *The Butterfly Ball* was adapted in 1973 into a then-popular book by author William Plomer and illustrator Alan Aldridge. Plomer died before it was published, but its success prompted Aldridge to conceive of expanding the idea into an album that would go on to soundtrack an animated film.

Initially, Aldridge imagined Pink Floyd as composers of the music to fit the theme of a woodland party for insects and other small animals. When that didn't pan out, he approached

first Jon Lord, who was too busy with Purple, and then the band's just-departed bass player.

"It was something that just landed in my lap," Glover acknowledges. "When I agreed to take it on, Alan said to me: 'Listen to Benjamin Britten,' so I got the inkling he wanted something orchestral and classical. I didn't take that approach, though, because I'm not that kind of musician or writer. I write songs.

"It was a massive undertaking. I had this vision of going to a villa in the sun, somewhere with a grand piano, and spending a month writing it. It didn't work out that way. I went to Minorca, where it rained all day, every day and there was no piano."

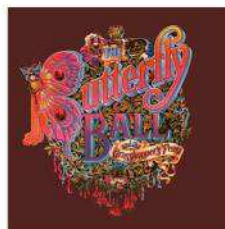
Ultimately, Glover composed most of the work at home on his own baby grand. Studying Aldridge

and Plomer's book, he reasoned that there were 20 characters in it and so wrote 20 songs. In keeping with the source material, these were playful, gently appealing and very much "of the time". The first

song Glover composed was an ingratiating Beatles pastiche, *Love Is All*. And since he was also making an album with Elf at the time, he had Ronnie James Dio sing it.

"That song went on to be number one in Holland for five weeks straight," Glover marvels. "It was massive in France, too. Later, I believe it was used in a commercial for baby yoghurt."

In all, the album took six months to make, the bulk of the recording done at London's Kingsway studio, owned by Ian Gillan. As well as Dio, Glover brought in David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes as



vocalists, along with a sprawling cast of session musicians and a full orchestra.

Released on November 18, 1974, the album found an audience in pockets of mainland Europe but passed almost unnoticed elsewhere. A one-off show was arranged at the Royal Albert Hall on October 16, 1975 in what Glover calls a "last-ditch attempt" to make the album take off in the UK.

For this only live performance to date of *The Butterfly Ball*, Glover reassembled the album's cast, except for Dio, who bailed at the last minute when he joined Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow. Glover instead called up Gillan, who to all intents and purposes had retired from singing after leaving Purple in '73. Completing the on-stage line-up was an even more unlikely duo: renowned Hammer Horror actor Vincent Price, as the narrator, and as an additional singer the model Twiggy.

"Even now, I have no idea how we got Vincent Price or Twiggy," Glover says, laughing. "But they were each such a pleasant surprise. They were so easy to work with, and she was a lovely girl."

"I remember the gig for a certain amount of chaos. I had no resources, really. I did a lot of it myself, organising rehearsals, doing the arrangements for the orchestra and booking the singers, but for Twiggy. Apart from Purple's induction into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 2016, it was also the only time that Ian, David and Glenn have all shared a stage."

"I had walked away from the business," takes up Gillan. "I hadn't sung a note in two years. I got the call from Roger the night before, and went on anonymously. I wasn't listed in the programme, because Ronnie Dio was supposed to have done it."

"I had short hair, was wearing a shirt and ambled on stage. I had the lyrics on a lectern and no idea

"I have no idea how we got Vincent Price or Twiggy."

Roger Glover

what would happen. But I got a standing ovation. It went on for quite a while, and I couldn't help but think, 'This is what I do. Why am I messing around?' Within a week, I'd got my guitar out and was back in the studio. I haven't looked back since that day, and it's all thanks to Roger."

Film-maker Tony Klinger, who had worked on the TV series *The Avengers* and would go on to direct The Who's movie *The Kids Are Alright*, shot the Albert Hall show. It's preserved now on YouTube, the footage as muddy as canal water and interspersed with risible scenes of adult actors in animal costumes frolicking about.

"The night itself was fantastic," says Glover, "but I had nothing to do with the filming. Of course, I realised too late that it was a low-budget job and would end up looking crap."

"It's been years since I sat down and listened to the actual album, but *The Butterfly Ball* is still cooking. There's interest now in turning it into a full-blown stage musical, which I wanted to do all along; I even wrote a script twenty-five years ago. But you need a whole team and lots of money to mount something of that nature. We're working on it now, that's all I can say." 🗨

A new boxset of *The Butterfly Ball* is out now on Cherry Red and will be reviewed next issue.

Glenn Hughes and Pat Thrall: unfulfilled potential.



HUGHES/THRALL

Glenn Hughes remembers the late 70s as his "dark period". For him the ringing tills from the Purple years had fallen silent, and the bassist must have wondered if the limp sales of his 1977 solo album *Play Me Out* were now par for the course. If the public were ambivalent about his solo career, Hughes was only marginally more engaged.

"I wasn't interested in doing very much at all," he told *Classic Rock*.

But when he met Californian guitarist Pat Thrall in 1981, the old spark returned. "We immediately had all these amazing signatures and this great sound," he recalls. "We wrote a lot of material."

It proved a false dawn. Recordings in Malibu ran on cocaine, and Hughes and Thrall laboured to get their sound down on tape. While much of the resulting album was excellent, such as the hushed

power-balladry of *First Step Of Love*, in 1982 Toto and Asia had the AOR market all sewn up, and the duo struggled on the road. "We weren't in the best of shape," Hughes says of a US tour with Santana. "The record company probably saw that and we didn't tour much afterward. And that's when we started to fall to pieces."

In 1983, *Sounds* journalist Sylvie Simmons visited Hollywood and found the pair on defiant form (Thrall insisting: "We're not breaking up, we're just beginning", Hughes asserting: "This is the best band that's ever come out of Deep Purple"). They would make a few demos for an aborted second album, but it all fizzled out, leaving Hughes/Thrall as a tantalising question mark.

"Most of my friends in the music industry talk about Hughes-Thrall more than any of my other records," Hughes says. "They all love it." **HY**



WARHORSE

In the summer of 1969, Deep Purple's incoming vocalist Ian Gillan had a devastating caveat. "He made it very clear that he wasn't joining without Roger [Glover]," their then bassist Nick Simper told website *Louder*. "I was definitely peeved."

Reeling from this de facto sacking, Simper took up with soul belter Marsha Hunt's backing band, White Trash, and gradually began replacing its sub-par members. When a pregnant Hunt herself stepped away, Warhorse emerged in its own right, with Simper giving vocalist Ashley Holt the run-out he'd almost had with Purple in 1968. "He was far better than any of the various vocalists who fronted Deep Purple," Simper told *Let It Rock* in 2008. Rick Wakeman, too, was briefly in the frame, before the line-up was completed by guitarist Ged Peck, drummer Mac Poole and keyboard player Frank Wilson.

Warhorse got out of the gates fast, signing with Vertigo Records, debuting live under Mott The Hoople and, in 1970, releasing a snarling self-titled first album that told Purple what they were missing. "Warhorse was every bit as heavy," Simper said, "and rocked just as hard."

Yet sales were wretched. When the album failed to chart, and 1972's *Red Sea* likewise sank, Vertigo ditched Warhorse. Poole left for Gong. Wakeman, who was due to produce a third album, poached Holt and new drummer Barney James for his *Journey To The Centre Of The Earth* album – and they never came back. Simper took

the hint, and Warhorse went to the great rock'n'roll glue factory that same year.

"Of course, success is only measured by record sales," the bassist considered, years later, "but I will always think of Warhorse as the better band." **HY**



Trapeze at London's Roundhouse in '73: (l-r) Mel Galley, Glenn Hughes, Dave Holland.



TRAPEZE

Fronted by the future Voice Of Rock, Trapeze were soon on board the Express To Success. But then Deep Purple came calling and walked off with the golden-throated goose.

Words: **Paul Rees**

Growing up in the mid-60s in Cannock in the West Midlands, Glenn Hughes had three heroes. The first two were those of many other kids: George Harrison and Eric Clapton. The third was a teenage guitarist three years ahead of Hughes at school, name of Mel Galley. It was Galley's example that convinced Hughes to ditch trombone lessons and pick up the guitar. And when at 17 he was offered the chance to join Galley in a local covers band, Finders Keepers, he leapt at it, switching to bass guitar so as to be able to fill the vacant role. The band enjoyed a measure of success on the Midlands club circuit. But as the 60s came to a close, audiences looked for things more original and challenging.

In 1969 their enterprising manager, Tony Perry, decided to take away Hughes, Galley and drummer

Dave Holland, and pair them with a couple of older hands from another covers band he looked after, The Montanas. Teaming up with singer/trumpet player John Jones and keyboard player Terry Rowley, they became Trapeze.

One of the first songs the new group wrote, a decorative ballad by Rowley titled *Send Me No More Letters*, attracted the attention of two of The Beatles' chief lieutenants, Neil Aspinall, head of the Fab Four's Apple Corps, and their one-time roadie and now personal assistant Mal Evans.

"Neil and Mal came down to see us play a couple of early shows in London and wanted us to record for Apple," Hughes recalls. "We even went down to the Apple studio at 3 Savile Row. They had just had this new sound board flown over from America, but the engineers were so stoned on pot they couldn't figure how to operate it. We were

surrounded by greatness, all these drums and guitars that The Beatles had used, but no one was capable of recording us. After two days of hanging around the place we just left."

Instead, Trapeze threw in their lot with a band closer to home, the Moody Blues, from Birmingham, signing to their Threshold Records. Moodies bassist John Lodge produced Trapeze's self-titled album, which was very much a period piece with its surfeit of whimsical psychedelia and flowery harmonies. By then, Perry had concluded that Hughes was a better bet as lead singer than the more experienced Jones, so it was the fresh-faced teenager who fronted the record.

"Six months after the band had released that first album, people were apparently talking about me as a great singer, but I'd had no inclination of that," Hughes insists. "I hadn't even known I could sing."

GETTY

The only other bass player fronting a band back then was Jack Bruce [with Cream]. Our situation just came about through circumstance, but for me it was like: 'Everyone! I have arrived!'

Soon enough, the displaced Jones and also Rowley returned to the more familiar confines of The Montanas. Freed up, Hughes, Galley and Holland set about transforming themselves into a power trio, following a blueprint laid down by the likes of Cream and the Jimi Hendrix Experience.

The band's second album, *Medusa*, released in November 1970, just five months after *Trapeze*, was altogether more forceful. Its seven songs were revved along by Galley's chunky riffs, but they were particularly marked out by Hughes's voice. Speaking today, Hughes still bursts with enthusiasm at the mere mention of *Medusa*.

"It's a beautiful piece of music," he lavishes. "I was still getting used to coming out of a band that was four-part-harmony-based and my voice was a little thinner then, but I was very influenced by Steve Marriott and the great soul-rock singers. When you cross rock and soul, that's what Glenn Hughes is all about. I wrote the closing title track in two parts. The intro is very melodic and American West Coast-sounding, and the second part riffy and heavy. Ever since, I've carried that kind of crossover with me."

"Even before *Medusa* had come out, the Moody Blues took us out on tour with them in America. We did seventeen shows in twenty days, playing to fifteen to twenty thousand people a night. By the time we got to Texas in December 1970, they took to us like we were Texans. That's when the rocket ship lifted off."

Trapeze criss-crossed the US four times in support of *Medusa*. Although the record didn't break through nationwide, they built up pockets of hard-core support on both coasts and in the south. Not surprisingly, when it came time to make their third album,

a strong American influence found its way into the new material that Galley and particularly Hughes were writing. Altogether, 1972's *You Are the Music... We're Just The Band* was an airier, more melodic and varied collection than its predecessor, and on its two standout tracks, *Coast to Coast* and *What Is A Woman's Role*, Hughes gave full rein to his soulful, acoustic-based side.

"I was an avid vinyl collector of all kinds of music," he explains, "and at that time Crosby, Stills And Nash, Stevie Wonder and Sly And The Family Stone were all going through my head. For me, it's a very progressive sounding record and entirely different to *Medusa*. I was still just nineteen, twenty and growing as a songwriter."

Almost immediately, *You Are the Music...* caught the ears of Ritchie Blackmore. At the time, Blackmore was at loggerheads with Ian Gillan in Deep Purple and also contemplating ousting Roger Glover, so was already scouting for replacements. When, in the autumn of 1972, Trapeze played a four-night stand at the Whiskey A Go Go in LA, Blackmore was in the audience on the

first night, Jon Lord and Ian Paice on the second. It was the beginning of a courtship that would last nine months, concluding in May 1973 when Purple's mainstays had Hughes flown from Baltimore to New York City to see Purple play at Madison Square Garden.

"They asked me there and then if I'd like to play bass in their band," he recalls. "I replied: 'Um... but I'm a singer.' To which they told me that I would sing as well, but that they were going to ask Paul Rodgers to be their lead vocalist. At that, I said: 'I'm in! Where do I sign?'"

Of course, things didn't quite play out that way. Already in the process of putting Bad Company together, Rodgers declined the offer, and Purple instead picked out the young, unknown David Coverdale to complete the new line-up that soon rattled off the *Burn* and *Stormbringer* albums.

With Hughes gone, Galley took over on lead vocals in a reconfigured Trapeze. A fourth album, the so-so *Hot Wire*, scraped the lower reaches of the US *Billboard* Hot 200 in 1974.

Hughes's Purple adventure took off in front of 400,000 people at the California Jam in April 1974, but it wasn't long before it turned sour. By the time a Blackmore-less Purple ground to a halt in March 1976, he was bingeing on booze and cocaine,

a mess. He retreated to the Black Country, and started work on a first solo album, 1977's *Play Me Out*, with Galley and Holland joining him.

"I began making that record in the long, hot British summer of 1976," says Hughes. "To all intents, it was Trapeze back together. It was going so well I called my agent in America and told him I would love to

take Trapeze out to the States that August."

The good vibes lasted for just as long as it took for the re-formed Trapeze to rehearse for the tour and hit the road. Hughes had split with his long-term girlfriend and taken up with *Exorcist* starlet

"People were apparently talking about me as a great singer. I hadn't even known I could sing."

— Glenn Hughes —



Hughes swaps his bass for a Les Paul during rehearsals in 1973.

Linda Blair, who was also on a self-destructive streak. They were disastrous as a couple, and the ailing Hughes quickly bailed from the tour.

"It was a difficult time for me," he says now. "I wasn't in the greatest head space and was doing what I was doing. You know the story. Let's just say I was over-serviced at the bar. It was the wrong time for me to do a tour."

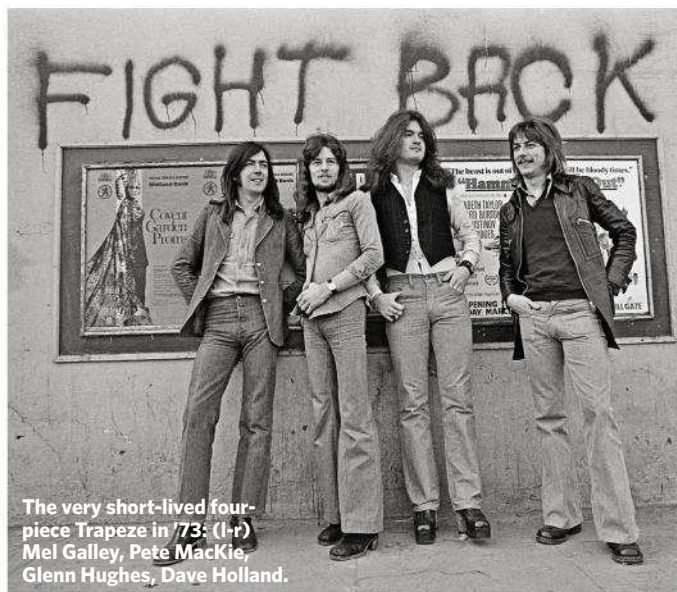
Galley went on to join David Coverdale's Whitesnake for a spell, Holland joined Judas Priest, and Hughes eventually won the battle with his demons. Eighteen years later, Trapeze tried again and managed 20 dates around their traditional American strongholds. The stars were no better aligned, though, for it to amount to more than just another fleeting reunion.

"The shows were great, but I was a sober man now and other people weren't," says Hughes. "I love my friends, but I couldn't be around people who got shit-faced all the time."

An occasional one-off get-together aside, those 1994 shows were Trapeze's last. Their legacy

should be the six studio albums they ultimately made. Yet in 2004, a darker, more harrowing chapter was written into their story. Holland was convicted of the indecent assault of a 17-year-old lad with learning difficulties who he had been teaching drums to. He served eight years in prison, and continued to protest his innocence up to his death in January this year. Galley died in 2008, taken by cancer at 60. Hughes, enjoying a career renaissance in what can be considered his twilight years, even now refers to Trapeze as "my band".

"At one time, you couldn't have put bets on me being the only one left," he says wistfully. "We were just kids in Trapeze, and obviously there was all that stuff with Dave that happened afterwards, and that I wasn't privy to. But the memories of that band are ones that will stay with me forever." 🕒



The very short-lived four-piece Trapeze in '73: (l-r) Mel Galley, Pete MacKie, Glenn Hughes, Dave Holland.



ROGER GLOVER

After taking a keen interest in how Purple's producers got the band's sound on tape, in 1971 their bassist decided to give it a go himself. Cue successful parallel career move, as Deep Purple's branches spread out to include Elf, Nazareth, Judas Priest, Rainbow and more...

Words: **Paul Rees**

No one during these past 50 years has been better placed than Deep Purple bassist Roger Glover to calculate the combinations of virtuosity, stubbornness, flair, wilfulness and ego that have shaped the Purple legend. After joining the band with his Episode Six bandmate Ian Gillan in 1969, for the next four years Glover made up a rhythm section alongside Ian Paice that was both huge-sounding and agile. With Gillan he established the MkII line-up's most productive songwriting team. Famously, Glover

dreamed up the title for *Smoke On The Water* one night in his hotel room bed in Montreux in December 1971.

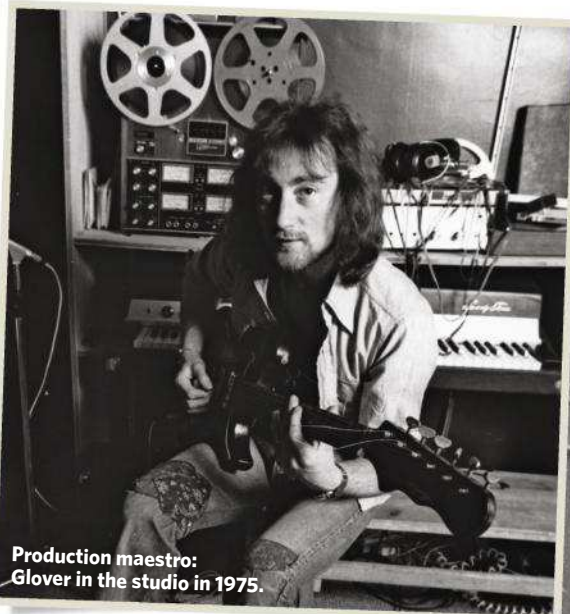
Earlier that year, Glover had added another string to his bow. It was then that Purple Records came into being. Having taken a keen interest in how Martin Birch and Purple's other engineers had captured the band's sound in the studio, Glover grasped the opportunity offered to take on his own production jobs. His first assignment was an album for his good friend and future Rush/Stevie Nicks producer Rupert Hine and partner David

MacIver, 1971's *Pick Up A Bone*. He recalls vividly arriving for his first day at London's Air Studios.

"A load of session musicians were already gathered in the main room," he says. "I walked in and paced about for half an hour, before I asked the engineer rather shyly: 'Er, excuse me, but where does the producer normally sit?' To which his answer was: 'Sit anywhere you fucking like – you're the producer.'"

With this particular etiquette established for him, Glover never looked back. Next, in 1972, he recorded a debut album with Ronnie James Dio's

GETTY



Production maestro:
Glover in the studio in 1975.

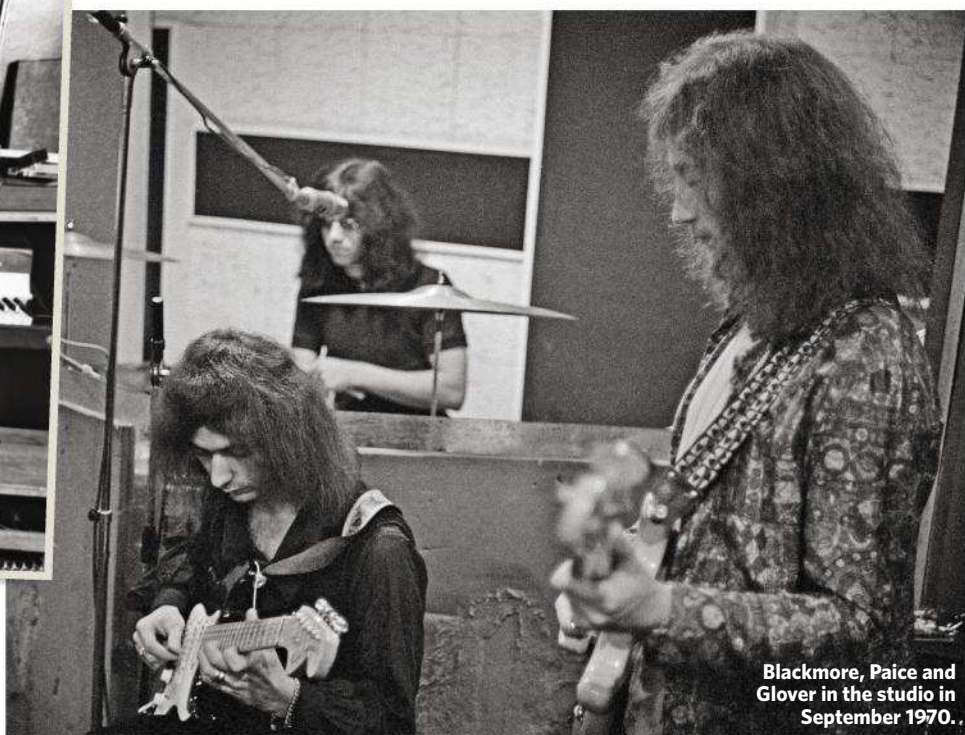
Elf, the first of three that they made together. After leaving Purple in 1973, he worked continuously throughout the next six years in various studios, overseeing albums by, among others, Nazareth (three, starting with 1973's *Razamanaz*), Rory Gallagher (*Calling Card* in 1976), and Judas Priest (*Stained Class*, released in 1978).

He was also respected, liked and trusted enough to be given the reins by three of his fellow ex-Purple men. In order, he did Gillan's comeback album with the Ian Gillan Band (*Child In Time*, 1976), a brace of solo records with David Coverdale (*White Snake* in 1977, and *Northwinds* in 1978), then *Down To Earth* for Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow in 1979, after which he joined that band and carried on as producer for their three albums that followed.

"As a producer, I like things to go fairly quickly," he reasons. "I have no fondness for producers who spend a whole day getting the bass drum sound. From that very first record with Rupert, I wanted to get turned on by the music. When the session musicians started to run through the first song that day, it didn't quite swing enough for me. I went into the room and said to them: 'Look, I want it to groove so I'm able to swing my hips to it.' And then I started to dance in front of these guys to try to show them the feel I was after. Unintentionally and accidentally, I was being a producer."

"It's about getting a performance out of the artist. That's the bottom line. I always wanted the artist to be true to their own vision. Otherwise it's a difficult job to pin down. You need to be a wet nurse, psychiatrist and friend in need – and all of those things at once."

When Purple MkII re-formed for the *Perfect Strangers* album in 1984, Glover doubled up as their producer, and continued to be for five more albums, before concluding after 1998's *Abandon* that no one in the band was listening to him any more. Purple's last two records have been recorded by the just as venerable Bob Ezrin, whom Glover cites as his all-time favourite producer.



Blackmore, Paice and Glover in the studio in September 1970.

Today, Glover is at his home in Switzerland. The archetypal gentleman rock star, he's gracious with his time, thoughtful, considered and laughs readily, often at himself. All of which has surely stood him in good stead in the producer's seat, wherever it may have been sited.

What's the most valuable lesson you've learned in forty-six years of producing records?

Give me a couple of hours and I'll let you have an answer. Off the top of my head, I would say how to be firm while being friendly; how to not be self-conscious and speak your mind and say things that need to be said. There's a lot of psychology involved.

The other thing I've learned is that mixing is a spiritual occupation. You can hear in your head a sound in front of you in the air as you listen to the music. You want to have that sound be in an organic circle with nothing sticking out or too weird happening, something that makes for

a pleasing balance. When you finish making a record, you should take at least a week or two off before you start mixing, because you need to hear the music fresh and untainted by the experience of recording it.

"Ritchie's his own master and it's difficult to tell him what to do."

What do you remember of Ronnie Dio from working with Elf?

Ian Paice and I produced that first record of theirs together. I believed in that band wholeheartedly. They were

just great, and Ronnie played bass and sang. Technically he was one of the best singers I've ever worked with. He had a voice that could encompass anything Sinatra could do, as well as the hardest rock, and he was a one-take guy. He wouldn't drop in to repair bits and pieces, he'd start and finish a song all in one go.

By the third Elf album (1975's *Trying To Burn The Sun*), I was getting to miss being in a band, and so I said to Ronnie: 'Look, if this record doesn't work out, do you fancy starting a band with me?' He said

yes. And that was great until he announced that he was joining Rainbow. That didn't go down well with me, but I got used to it.

The Ian Gillan Band's *Child In Time* was the first record Ian had made in three years, and his first since leaving Purple. Did your having had such a long-standing relationship with him make it easier or harder to produce?

I don't think it made any difference. It was a difficult album to make in general. And not because of Ian and me, but really the band was an odd mixture of directions, none of which really suited Ian. It was a very experimental album, and I don't have a great deal of pride in it. ➤



"Ritchie went that way..." Don Airey, Cozy Powell, Graham Bonnett and Glover with Rainbow in 1979.



Glover with Deep Purple in 2004.

How did working with Ian's successor in Purple, David Coverdale, compare?

Good. David was living in Munich at the time, and I spent a day with him over there while he played piano and sang. I thought he was a really talented guy. It was very workmanlike on those two records. I used good session musicians who all came with a pedigree, and everything went fairly smoothly. Looking back, I think that as a producer I wasn't strong enough. David had great ideas, but not all of them were *that* great. I should have moulded them a bit better.

Rainbow's *Down To Earth* made it a hat-trick of former Purple men you'd produced. How did that come about?

Bruce Payne was both Rainbow's manager and mine. One day in the office, he played me a recording of *Since You've Been Gone* [written by Russ Ballard] and asked me if I thought it was a hit. I said: "Could be. Why?" When he told me Ritchie wanted to do it, I said: "Never!" It was a pop song, and the last thing I had heard from Ritchie was *Stargazer*, which had blown me away. But Bruce was serious. I flew over to Chicago to meet the band and we got along okay. We started rehearsing in Connecticut, and the first thing that happened was that Ronnie James Dio left.

This was after about ten days of fairly mediocre rehearsals. There was no material. Ritchie would start to play something, the

band would jam along and Ronnie would sit in a corner with a notebook, scribbling away. He hardly ever opened his voice, and if he did it was one note, monotonous, no melody.

I remember going over to Ritchie's house one night. He gave me a cassette of a song he had got and asked me to take it to Ronnie. I took it to Ronnie, and he listened to it and was like, "Hmmm..." Then Ronnie also gave me a cassette and said: "This is my idea for a song." I duly transported that to Ritchie the next evening, and his response was: "That's not a song, it's just a rhythm." There was a huge gulf between the two of them over what they wanted.

"David [Coverdale] had great ideas, but not all of them were *that* great."

At that point there was no one left in the band but Ritchie and Cozy Powell. I sort of helped them to re-form. We met Don Airey and started working on the album without a lead singer.

Ritchie had a bass player friend of his come in, which was a bit uncomfortable because he couldn't really play that much. Of course, Ritchie wanted to go and record in a castle. We were in an eleventh-century chateau in France. I started to play bass and because we didn't have a singer, also to write songs. When we finally got a singer, Graham Bonnet, I'd written most of the material.

At the end of the album, Don and Cozy said: "Hey, you're playing

bass, you're writing, how come you're not in the band?" Anyway, words were spoken and I was asked to join. I was very happy to do so, to be honest. I also think that album is a pretty good production of mine.

You went on and made three more albums with Rainbow and with an ever-changing cast of other musicians. To what degree could Ritchie be produced?

Usually, Ritchie's his own master and it's difficult to tell him what to do. But he would accept my advice whenever he was doing a solo. I was pretty honest with him. I remember doing the instrumental for the *Difficult To Cure* album, *Vielleicht Das Nächste Mal*. I had just been listening to *Blow By Blow*, the Jeff Beck album, which is obviously a masterpiece. Beck's guitar playing on that was incredible. In Rainbow we had this moody backing track, but Ritchie was doing too much over it. I told him to slow down and get more melodic and bare, to leave some space, and that's what he did.

I suppose the changing line-ups did make it difficult in some ways. A new singer changes everything anyway, and Rainbow went from Ronnie to Graham Bonnet and then to Joe Lynn Turner. But it's Ritchie's band, so it really hinged on him. He was the continuity.

Precisely how much patience and diplomacy have you required?

Oh gosh, I don't know. I am a patient man, yes. I remember thinking sometime towards the end of the seventies that for all the productions I'd





Going Dutch: Glover and Ronnie Dio with Purple in Rotterdam in 2000.

done, I hadn't really done enough good stuff. But of course then you realise that most producers do a lot of stuff and not all of it's great. So I kind of got away with it in a way. Maybe I also had a feeling of being a pretender to the throne as a producer. Really, I was just having fun, and so it didn't feel like a job or hard work, even though you put the hours in.

Outside of the Purple links, which records have stood out for you that you produced?

I had no idea about Rob Halford until I started working with Judas Priest. He has an amazing voice – it's inhumanly high. Certainly, the first album I did with Nazareth, *Razamanaz*. I think that's one of my best productions. First of all, they had asked me to produce a single, *Broken Down Angel*, which we did in London in late 1972. It turned out okay, and then they wanted me to do the album.

But I felt they were slightly uncomfortable in a London studio. Talking to them, they were very Scottish and went on about what they called "the Gangy", which was The Ganghut, where they rehearsed in Jamestown near Dumbarton. I suggested we record there with a mobile, because of course I'd had a similar experience making *Machine Head* with Purple. It worked out really well, because despite the fact the place was two pretty bare, ugly concrete rooms in a warehouse and really didn't sound great, the energy of the band was captured. Purple had toured with them, so I knew they had tons of energy and ambition. It all came together on that record and I think I helped them a lot.

Is there an artist or band you had a burning desire to work with but didn't?

I don't think there's anyone I've hankered to produce, no. Back in the seventies I was crazy about Little Feat. Their *Sailin' Shoes* and *Dixie Chicken*

albums blew me away, and I thought I would love to have produced them. But then the thought occurred: "What else could I bring to the picture? What would I change?" To which the answer was nothing, because everything about that band was marvellous.

Back to Deep Purple. The last time we spoke, you said it had got to be impossible for you to both produce and play in the band.

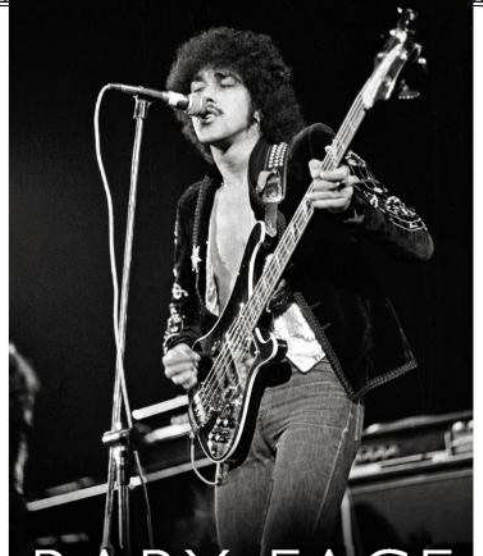
Yes. I was always open to having another producer in, but no one could agree on who. When we were working on what would become *The Battle Rages On...* album, we were recording up at Bearsville Studios near Woodstock. Ritchie wanted another producer, and had a guy from LA come in. Ritchie got him because he had liked the sound this guy got on Joan Jett's guitar. Which is an odd way to choose a producer, but doesn't matter.

As we started, Joe Lynn Turner was our singer, but during the course of recording it became obvious that we should part. I don't want to go into the reasons why, but we ended up with a lot of backing tracks and no singer. Then there came the long process of getting Ian back into the band, which is a whole other story in itself.

We were going to finish the album with Ian at a studio in Munich called Red Rooster. I said to Bruce Payne: "Now Ian's back, I really don't think we need an LA producer who doesn't know us or the trickiness of the situation." I told him I wouldn't be willing to finish the album unless I took over the production. He agreed, and so I assume did Ritchie. That was challenging, with the personalities involved, and it was always a bit like walking on eggshells, but despite all that I thought we came out with a decent record.

Sure enough, on the tour that followed, Ritchie left again. With Purple, the road is never smooth. But then again if it had been, no one would ever have noticed. **1**

"Technically, Ronnie Dio was one of the best singers I've ever worked with."



BABY FACE

THE SUPERGROUP THAT ALMOST WAS.

"Deep Purple constructed music in a very specific way," Ian Paice explains. "Limiting" isn't the word, but it was a little more arranged. Ritchie and I thought it would be fun to have the freedom of a three-piece band, where basically everything was up for grabs musically – you could change every song every night, which we couldn't really do in Purple.

"We'd see Phil Lynott with Thin Lizzy at the Speakeasy club in London really early on in their career, and we thought: 'Wow, what a fantastic voice.' But we didn't actually pay a lot of attention to his bass playing, because he was such a great vocalist. So we thought we'd try something out – me, Ritchie and him. We got a day together in a studio in Holland Park in West London, and we just started to mess around to see what happened.

"We started jamming some new stuff and seeing what happened, which is what we do with Purple anyway, though obviously the Purple set-up with very different. The stuff we were jamming was bluesier, more in a Cream or Free vein, that kind of idea.

"Well, Phil's voice was staggering, wonderful. But he couldn't play, at least not to the standard that we needed if it was just Ritchie, myself and a bass. When there's only three of you, everybody's got to be really good on everything they do. Really, the bass playing had to be on a par with someone like Jack Bruce. And, God bless him, Phil wasn't there yet. He was pretty simple, and quite often out of tune and out of time. And although he became really, really good at everything he did, at that point he wasn't.

"Ritchie and I looked at each other and went: 'It's not working. It's a nice attempt to try and do this three-piece thing, but let's go and rethink it.' But we never did rethink it. We got back on the road with Purple and it just sort of disappeared into the mist.

"I saw Phil a couple of times after that, but it was always really in passing: 'Hey, how you doing? Gotta go. Bye bye.' But the ship had sailed by that time.

"We actually recorded the session. The tapes got lost somewhere along the line, but really there was nothing to it. We didn't even bother mixing it. It just wasn't happening." **DE**



ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

(AND IN THE RIGHT ORDER)

The keyboard player who had previously lent his considerable talents to some of rock's greats, **Don Airey** is now enjoying being part of the longest unbroken line-up Deep Purple have ever had.

Words: **Dave Everley** Portraits: **Kevin Nixon**

Don Airey has a theory about the great guitarists. "They're insecure," he says. "All of them. A lot of the best guitarists don't know how they do what they do; it's like it comes from another world, almost. When you're a keyboard player you just read music and play it. That's easy."

This is typical Don Airey. You'd be hard-pushed to find a more self-effacing musician, especially one who has played keyboards with some of the greatest acts in rock history: Rainbow, Black Sabbath, Ozzy Osbourne, Deep Purple, Gary Moore, Whitesnake...

During his 50-year career, Airey has seen the best and worst rock'n'roll has to offer. He's been there at the birth of countless now legendary songs and iconic albums; he has also witnessed the sort of devastating tragedy that no one should have to live through.

We're sitting in the upstairs kitchen at Headline Music Studio on the outskirts of Cambridge, where Airey recorded his new solo album, *One Of A Kind*. The 69-year-old looks surprisingly healthy for a man who was hospitalised with pneumonia five weeks ago, having been taken ill at Los Angeles airport while he was waiting for his flight back to Britain.

This morning, his wife jokingly teased him that he would be talking to *Classic Rock* about his favourite subject: "Me, me, me, me, me." Except that's not Airey's style. As befits a man who has spent most of his career just out of the spotlight (where he prefers to be), he's more comfortable heaping praise on anyone else but himself. He's rock royalty, although he'd be the last person to admit it. "It's nice that people just appreciate you, that they think anything at all," he says. "I wouldn't want to be a lead singer for anything. I've got a keyboard in front of me. I can't think of anything better than that."

KEVIN NIXON

If you're going to base your professional philosophy on an answerphone message, it might as well be that of Sir Tim Rice, multimillionaire lyricist behind musicals including *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*. "It says: 'There's no one here at the moment, but I can do it,'" says Airey, laughing. "That's how I look at things too."

Airey wanted to be in the music business even before the music business existed. He began playing the piano at three years old, latching on to theme tunes he heard on the radio. As a kid he fell in love with some of the great jazz players – pianist Bill Evans, Hammond organ legend Jimmy Smith – but soon got caught up in the growing rock'n'roll movement. His first band were The Atoms, who covered songs by The Animals and The Kinks. "My life changed," he says. "Mates, girls, getting invited to football matches."

His dad, a World War II veteran who played piano in the pubs and clubs of their native Sunderland, was dubious about Don's chosen career, especially the shady business side of it. Still, by the time Airey Sr saw his son play Newcastle City Hall with Rainbow in the early 80s, he'd come around to the idea.

"I said: 'What did you think, dad?' And he said: 'That's the loudest and most impressive thing I've experienced since El Alamein.'"

Airey spent a year studying piano at the Royal Manchester College Of Music, then two years playing in a band on cruise ships. It was a lucrative job – he returned with enough money to buy a house in Sunderland for cash. Instead he opted for London and the pursuit of his rock'n'roll dreams.

Airey was playing in some long-forgotten band on the club circuit when someone asked if he wanted to join a new group that Cozy Powell was putting together. The former Jeff Beck Group drummer had just bagged a solo hit single with the thunderous *Dance With The Devil*. "I said: 'Yeah, sure.' Cos I loved that song."

The two became great friends. Airey talks fondly of Powell, who died in a car crash in 1998. "He was the best bloke I ever knew," he says. "He always looked the part, he was straight in his dealings with you, he kept himself together all the time. He's someone I really miss."

The band, Cozy Powell's Hammer, notched up three hit singles before the drummer left to form a new outfit, Strange Brew. Within months, Powell had joined Ritchie Blackmore's latest band, Rainbow. Airey would follow him into Rainbow a few years later, but not before forging his second great musical friendship.

When Don Airey first met Gary Moore, the guitarist was playing with jazz-fusion band Colosseum II.

After Hammer's collapse, Airey hired out his keyboard to a friend who was working with Moore's new group. When he went to the studio to pick up his equipment, he was greeted by Moore and Colosseum drummer and band leader Jon Hiseman.

"Yes? Who are you?" Hiseman asked suspiciously. When Airey replied that he was the person whose keyboards they were, Hiseman asked if he could play them. "I told him yes, he gave me this piece of music, and three hours later I was in the band."



Blizzard Of Ozz on the *Diary Of A Madman* US tour in 1982: (l-r) Tommy Aldridge, Don Airey, Ozzy Osbourne, Randy Rhoads, Rudy Sarzo.

Airey was impressed by Hiseman, but he was even more impressed by the guitarist. "Gary was overflowing with ideas," he says. "He was unstoppable. You put a guitar on him and he was off. The tension in him was amazing."

It was the start of a friendship that would last until Moore's life ended in 2011. Airey played on several of the guitarist's albums from the late 70s to the mid-00s. Moore returned the favour, contributing to Airey's debut solo album of 1988, *K2*. "There's a track on it called *Sea Of Dreams*," he says. "It's got some of the greatest guitar playing I've ever heard by anyone. It was just extraordinary how gifted Gary was."

Gifted but prickly. And troubled. Airey puts this down partly to a surplus of talent.

"The thing about Gary was that he was that brilliant when he was seventeen. He never got any better, that I noticed. But he was desperate to make it. And the blues was finally the funnel that allowed him to do that. But he and I always got on."

Airey stayed in touch with Moore down the years. In early 2011 he was in on holiday in France with when he realised he hadn't spoken to his friend Gary in a while. He told his wife he'd call him when they got back. Minutes later he received a text from a mutual friend informing him that Moore had died. "I was absolutely devastated. It was just awful," he says quietly.

Airey has a feeling that Moore's last few years weren't happy ones. "I think he was lonely. But if

somebody's got an alcohol problem or a drug problem, there's nothing you can do. They've got to do it themselves. That's what happened with Ozzy. He just sat down one day and went: 'This stops now.'"

Like everybody he's ever worked with, Airey speaks very highly of Ozzy Osbourne. This isn't a cynical ploy on his part to ensure the work keeps rolling in, he's just the kind of person who genuinely likes other people.

Airey entered Ozzy's orbit in the late 1970s. To make ends meet he'd been playing on sessions. He

got a call to ask if he fancied playing on Black Sabbath's new album, *Never Say Die!*.

Cautiously, he agreed.

"They were supposed to be really wild," he says. "Tony Iommi had a reputation for hitting people. So I got quite a shock when they turned out

to be the nicest people I ever worked with. The first thing Ozzy did was make me a cup of tea."

Airey thinks they might have wanted him to join the band full-time, but his decision was made for him when he got a call from Cozy Powell. Rainbow were looking for a keyboard player, and Powell told his old friend he should get on a plane and go for the job. It was not a suggestion. "He said: 'No arguments. There's a ticket for you to New York.'"

When Airey arrived in America he was taken straight to meet Ritchie Blackmore. There was a clavinet in the room. "Ritchie walked in and said: 'Do you read music?' And he put this piece of Bach in front of me – which I pretended not to know but I actually did. I played it, and he was impressed. And we were off."

Of all the difficult bastards Don Airey has ever worked with, you'd think that Blackmore was the most difficult bastard of all.

"No, he's very easy to work with, Ritchie," he says. "You've just got to be ready for whatever voodoo he's going to conjure up on the guitar. If people are difficult to deal with, it's because ➤"

"When you're a keyboard player you just read music and play it. That's easy."



Passing the torch: Airey, Ian Gillan and Jon Lord with Purple at Hammersmith Apollo, September 6, 2002.



Never far from a keyboard of one sort or another. Airey in the studio, shot exclusively for *Classic Rock*, March 2018.

they're looking for the next step musically. It's your job to try and be there for them to make it happen, and maybe contribute a little on the side."

Rainbow were going through a period of turmoil. The band's original singer, Ronnie James Dio, had recently left. For a while it was just Blackmore, Powell and Airey, writing what would be 1979's *Down To Earth* album at a chateau in the south of France.

"I remember it was three in the morning and Ritchie going: 'We're a bit short', and he started playing *Danger Zone*. It was a full moon, there was mist in the valley, and this riff was coming back from the other side of the mountain."

Whatever magic was there in the valley that night fed into the album. The singles *Since You've Been Gone* and *All Night Long* briefly turned Rainbow into unlikely pop stars. "The shows were amazing too," says Airey. "They'd start with that amazing keyboard intro, then in would come Ritchie and Cozy and Roger Glover. Game, set and match."

But the line-up that made *Down To Earth* wasn't built to last. Powell was out after one too many clashes with Blackmore. Singer Graham Bonnett departed soon after.

"I'll never know why Cozy left," says Airey. "I don't think even he knew. I got on my knees and said: 'I'll shine your shoes every night if you stay.'"

Airey himself lasted one more album with Rainbow, 1981's *Difficult To Cure*. He found himself becoming more distant from Blackmore. "You don't speak for a few days on tour, then it becomes a week, then two weeks, three weeks. Then I knew it was time to go." He looks thoughtful. "Bands are funny things."

Airey insists he was the only person ever to quit Rainbow of his own volition.

"Ritchie never asked me to stay. He'd never do that," he says. "But I subsequently heard that he was put out that somebody had left rather than been fired."

Airey being Airey, the two of them are still friendly. He went to see Rainbow at their comeback gig in Birmingham. "We sat down backstage and talked about old times. I like Ritchie a lot. And I very much enjoyed the show. They've got a great keyboard player. That's always a bonus."

Airey didn't leave Rainbow with his eyes closed. Between *Down To Earth* and *Difficult To Cure* he'd played on the debut album from Ozzy Osbourne's new band, *Blizzard Of Ozz*, as a favour to Ozzy.

"Ozzy was trying to get something going again after Sabbath," he says. "But he didn't have a record deal, didn't really have proper management. Then I heard the tracks. [Uncanny Ozzy impression]

'Oh God, Ozzy, this is great, man.' 'Do you think so?' 'Yeah, Ozzy, they're brilliant.'"

Airey knew Ozzy and his bassist, Bob Daisley, but he'd never met hot-shot guitarist Randy Rhoads before. "Randy was a lovely guy," he says. "Very open, a wonderful musician. All he wanted to know was what Gary Moore was like."

Airey's most memorable contribution to the album was the gothic keyboards that usher in the occult anthem *Mr Crowley*. "I just cleared them out of the studio and said: 'Come back in half an hour.' Ozzy came back, heard it, and said: 'You just plugged into my head, man.'"

Airey walked out of Rainbow in 1981 straight into Ozzy's band. Life on the road was crazy, although not as crazy as you might think. "Ozzy liked a drink on the

days off, but on the day of a gig he didn't touch a drop. And he was funny with it.

"It was such a great band. And professional. In the four years I was on the road with him we never missed a show. Well, we did. For a big reason."

His voice quietens at this. He's talking about the death of Randy Rhoads in a plane crash on March 19, 1982, en route to a gig in Orlando. The band's bus driver, Andrew Aycock, was a qualified pilot and had offered to take Rhoads and make-up artist Rachel Youngblood in a single-engine plane. Aycock flew low over the bus twice. The third time, the plane's wing clipped the vehicle. It spun out of control and crashed. Aycock, Youngblood and Rhoads were killed instantly.

Airey saw the whole thing unfold. It's still too painful for him to talk about the tragic incident itself. "It was the most awful thing that ever happened, to witness something like that. It had a profound effect on me."

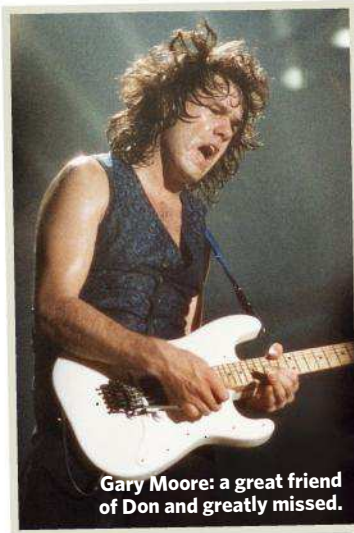
Somehow the band kept going. Airey says he doesn't know how they managed it. He played on *Bark At The Moon*, Ozzy's third solo album and the first one they made after Rhoads' death. "It was hard, because he wasn't there. It was the elephant in the room. The last time I saw Ozzy, I said to him: 'I can still hear him. I can still hear the sound of his guitar in my head. It's still there.'" He sighs. "He made such an impression, oh my God."

The death of Randy Rhoads didn't stop Airey in his tracks, but it did contribute to him slowing down in the 1980s. As did the fact he'd been on the road for 15 years and wanted to watch his children growing.

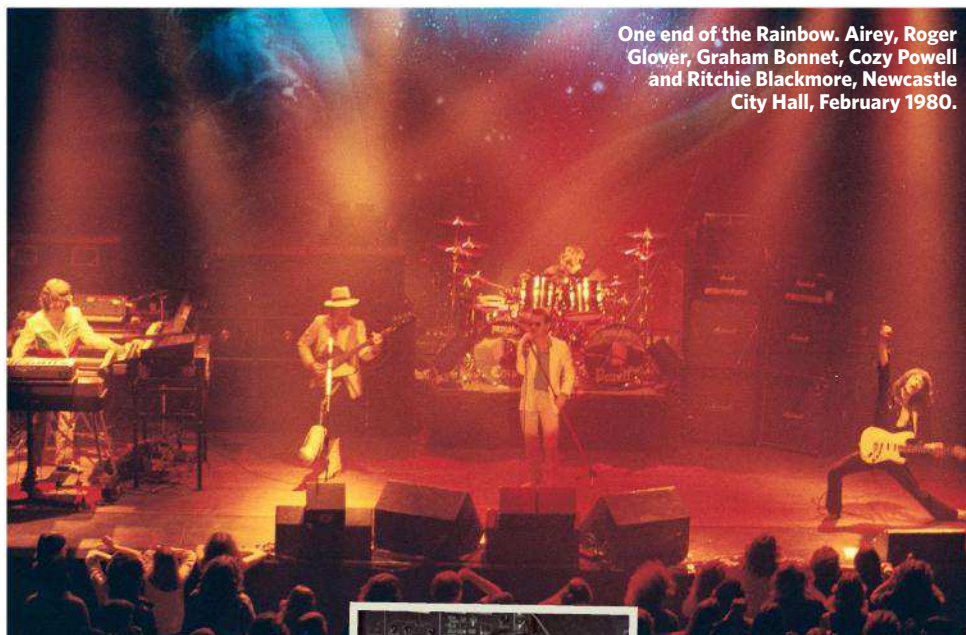
He kept his hand in, though. He'd parachute into sessions for such as Fastway, Jethro Tull and his old mate Gary Moore, work his magic and then disappear again. In 1985 he flew to Los Angeles at the invitation of David Coverdale to play on the album that became Whitesnake's MTV-era blockbuster 1987.

"It was a band in disarray, heads down," he says of Whitesnake. "David was four million dollars in debt, didn't know whether he was coming or going." Airey told Coverdale to stick with it, that the new songs were fantastic. One song in

"Gary Moore was overflowing with ideas. The tension in him was amazing."



Gary Moore: a great friend of Don and greatly missed.



One end of the Rainbow. Airey, Roger Glover, Graham Bonnet, Cozy Powell and Ritchie Blackmore, Newcastle City Hall, February 1980.

particular stuck in his mind: the epic *Still Of The Night*.

"There was a big section missing in the middle," he recalls. "I said: 'So what happens here?' [Whitesnake guitarist] John Sykes said: 'You do.'" *Still Of The Night*, with its grandiose middle section, became the first single from the album and set Whitesnake on the road to megastardom in the US.

But Airey remained reluctant to become enmeshed in a band situation again. He was content to play for other people and release the odd album of his own. All that finally changed in March 2002 when he joined the band he seemed born to play with: Deep Purple.

When Purple's iconic keyboard player Jon Lord was forced to pull out of tour just a few days before it was due to start, due to a debilitating knee problem, bassist Roger Glover called Airey to ask what he was doing for the next few days. "And this was the day before the tour," Airey recalls. "But I said still said yes. It was Deep Purple, after all."

The band had wanted him to deputise for just two or three shows, but Lord never returned.

"There was no thought in my head that I was replacing Jon," he says. "He came back for two or three days, but his heart wasn't in it."

Sixteen years on from his first rehearsal with Purple, Airey is still a part of Purple Mark VIII. It's the longest unbroken line-up the band have ever had, and the longest time Airey has spent in any band by at least a decade. He got to know Lord – who would make the occasional guest appearance with Purple – before his death in 2012. Airey laughs and says he was really checking that everything was still working. Lord seemed to be happy. Well, mostly.

"Jon didn't like me having my head raised when I played the Hammond. He always used to say: 'You've got to lower your head when you play it. Bow to the Hammond!'"

And what about Ritchie Blackmore? Does he ever compare notes with the rest of the band?



"Nothing bad is ever said about Ritchie," he says, smiling. "I understand that it wasn't too good in the band before he left, and I think he expected the band to fold without him. But he's gone on and carved himself a new career. And Purple are still Purple."

And Don Airey is still Don Airey. He jokes about how his new solo album will send his ego spinning out of control. "It's nice being in charge. Everybody laughs at your jokes."

When we talk, he's due to take his band on the road for a few shows in support of *One Of A Kind*. But his recent bout of pneumonia has made him re-evaluate things. "There comes a time where you think: 'I should spend more time at home. You've got grandchildren, you want to be with them.'"

Of course, a lot of the people he knew don't get the chance to spend time with the grandkids: Randy Rhoads, Cozy Powell, Gary Moore, Jon Lord. But then there are the people he's still friends with:

Ozzy, Ritchie, all those other musicians whose songs and records his keyboards have enriched.

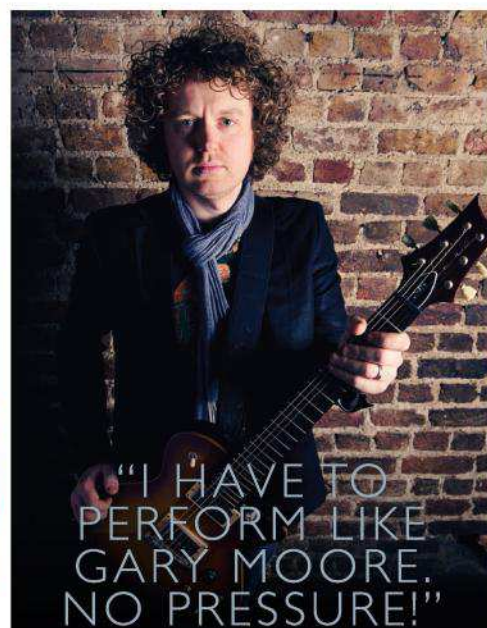
Airey has characteristically few regrets about his career. His biggest is that the Rainbow line-up that

made *Down To Earth* didn't stay together longer. "Somebody should have intervened to keep that band together, because it was great," he says.

One thing he certainly wouldn't want is to be anyone other than Don Airey, keyboard player extraordinaire and one-man support system. If he'd played things differently, maybe he could have been richer or more famous. But then that's not his style.

"It's just par for the course. If you get bitter about it and think: 'Oh, the money I deserve...' it doesn't do you any good," he says. "You swallow it and keep thinking about the music." 🎧

Don Airey's solo album One Of A Kind is out on May 25 via earMusic.



Simon McBride plays guitar on Don Airey's new solo album. He tells us what it's like to step into the shoes of Blackmore, Rhoads and Moore.

Did you know Don's work before you met him?

Yeah. I grew up listening to Gary Moore, so I was totally aware of who he was. It's funny, the first time he asked me to play with his band, it also featured Dan Rooney and Lawrence Cottle, who had both played with Gary Moore. So I'm going: "Oh shit. I have to perform up to the same level as Gary." No pressure at all.

Did you grow up wanting to be a blues guitarist, or a rock guitarist?

What I play most of the time is rock music. I got categorised as a blues guitarist, but I was never really into blues music in that way. These days the line is blurred between the blues scene and the rock scene anyway. You look at the likes of Joe Bonamassa or Phillip Sayce, they're just rock players playing blues. But then we all are.

How did you come to play with Andrew Strong, the singer from The Commitments?

When I was nineteen or twenty I was in Sweet Savage. Their drummer knew Andrew, and he was looking for a guitarist. We had a beer and ran through a lot of stuff. It was like an audition. I toured with him for eight or nine years.

When you play with Don's band, you're playing songs that originally featured Ritchie Blackmore, Randy Rhoads and Gary Moore. Is that daunting?

It was, but not now. Don said: "Don't try to copy them, just be yourself." Obviously there's certain things you have to do, but you put your own twist on it. But then I'm not going to come up with something better than Gary Moore, so if it's not broke, don't fix it.

You've also played alongside Don in Ian Gillan's solo band. If Steve Morse ever steps down from Deep Purple, are you the man to replace him?

Of course I'd love the chance to do it, but I'm sure there's a queue of people ahead of me. I've played most of the songs with Don and Ian over the years, so I'm fairly well-rehearsed. If Steve did step down, I'd be straight on a plane, beating down the door to it. But I don't think Steve will ever step down.



IAN PAICE

The only original member of Purple in the current – and surely final – line-up, their drummer talks early days, departures, splits, reunions, Blackmore and keeping the Purple ship afloat.

Words: **Dave Everley**

Ian Paice has been in Deep Purple longer than anyone else, but that doesn't give him bragging rights. "Yes, I have tenure," he says, "and I've been there since day one, but that's all. This band is a democracy these days, which is why it works."

It's Paice's quiet determination that played a key part in keeping the band together during the tough periods. "I've never thought of quitting. I had a gig I enjoyed, playing with musicians I like. It's been hard work at times, but it's been worth it."

Deep Purple formed fifty years ago this year. Did you ever expect to still be talking about it half a century on?

No. At the time, if you got five years you thought it was a brilliant achievement. There were only a few bands that cracked that. Even The Beatles were

only around for eight years, which seemed like a lifetime. But five years came and went, then... well, then things were getting more difficult. But we're still here.

What were the first few years of Purple like?

We were struggling to find an identity. We were trying to be a British Vanilla Fudge, but we realised fairly soon that we were never going to be them. It changed when Ian [Gillan] and Roger [Glover] joined. Suddenly you had five people all going in the same direction, musically and emotionally. And that was really exciting.

Back then did it feel like you were part of a new musical movement?

Yes and no. We were aware that the music coming out of this country was going in different directions

– you had Zeppelin, and before that Cream and The Who – but we had very little comprehension of what the other guys were doing because we were working so hard. There was very little socialising or cross-fertilisation, because you didn't have time for it.

There were some combustible personalities in the band. How much did that play a part in the music you were making?

Well, the only combustible person in the band at that point was Ritchie, and he was a much milder version of the person he became later. We didn't have the histrionics and the violent flare-ups that many other bands had. There was nobody there trying to call the shots and subjugate everybody else. We were working for each other, and that's what made it work like it did.



Paice with Jon Lord, whom he says was "just a lovely guy to be around".

You and Jon Lord kept the ship afloat after Gillan, Glover and Blackmore left. Were you gutted or relieved when Purple eventually did split up in 1976?

It was a relief, because it was not a happy band. We had Jon, David Coverdale and myself on one side, who were just doing what we did. And we had Tommy [Bolin, guitarist], God bless him, and Glenn [Hughes, bassist], who were both getting messed up at that time with the chemicals. Neither one of them was playing any good at all because they were somewhere else. It had to stop. It was destroying itself. And that was very sad.

By contrast, the reunion in 1984 seemed like a lot of fun – at least initially.

We'd been apart for a long, long time, and it was fun just getting together. The first day of playing together made the nonsense of the ten years we'd been apart very, very apparent. But personalities being what they are, a couple of years later Ritchie and Ian weren't seeing eye to eye on the world and all the rest of it, and it became a problem again.

The nineties was a fairly turbulent time for Deep Purple. How tough did it get?

It was tough in the beginning because Ritchie was mentally going somewhere else. He wasn't happy with what he perceived Ian was doing. He was making us suffer for the fact that he wasn't happy. If one of you downs tools it's very hard to carry it every night. It was obvious he was moving somewhere else, but when he handed his notice in, that was devastating. But we carried on, and we're still here.

What's Ritchie really like?

As a musician, I have immense respect for him. As a person, people think he's a very complex character, but he's not. To me, he sees the world in black and white: "I'll do this, I won't do that; I like you, I don't like you." I haven't really met him in decades now, but from what I see he's a more condensed version of the younger man I remember. Whether that's good or bad is not for me to say.

Can you remember the last time you spoke to Jon Lord before he died?

I saw Jon in 2012, just before we went to Nashville to start the sessions for the *Now What?!?* album. He was having a hard time. He'd lost so much weight, and there was something in his eyes that told me I probably wouldn't see him again. My last words to him were: "You be here when I get back." He gave a little wry smile, but I didn't believe it. I'd been in Nashville for about two and a half weeks when I got the call, and that was it. It was really sad. But it wasn't unexpected, because I saw that he didn't want to be here any more. It



It can be a lonely life when you travel in your own plane.

was just too much pain. He was a gentleman, a nice, gentle man. A lovely guy to be around.

Purple were inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 2016. Did you think "About time" or did you attend the ceremony there under duress?

No, we were there because the fans had voted for us to be there. It was for them. I have mixed feelings about it. The Hall Of Fame was a lovely idea when it started, but I look at it now and I see lots of inductees that have nothing to do with rock'n'roll, and I wonder if the financial reward for the people who are running it has overtaken the original dream.

Were you disappointed that Ritchie didn't turn up for it?

Ian Gillan assures me that he invited Ritchie to come along, but Ritchie chose not to. Having said

that, if he'd turned up at the last minute I wouldn't have been in the least bit surprised.

It seems the band has at least one fan in the Russian government – former president Dmitry Medvedev grew up listening to Purple.

As a fourteen-year-old kid, he would be under his bedclothes listening very, very quietly to Voice Of Europe or some radio station like that. Had he been caught he'd have been in deep shit. But thirty or forty years later he's the boss of a big country. We met him. He's a very personable guy, very

knowledgeable. Hey, he's a fan. What can I say?

Have you met Vladimir Putin?

No, we've never met Putin. He's more of an ABBA guy, apparently.

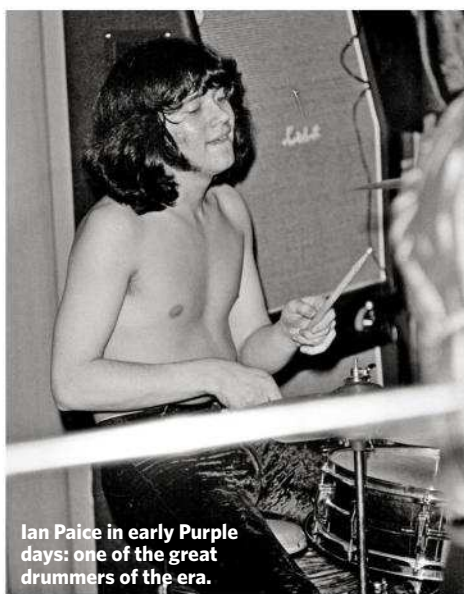
It's Deep Purple's fiftieth anniversary this year. Quite a milestone. What are the chances of even just a one-off gig involving every surviving member?

At this moment in time, zilch. I wouldn't mind, but I see no reason why Steve [Morse] and Don [Airey] should put up with it. Quite honestly, there's nothing in it for them, other than creating confusion and starting rumours again.

How much gas does Deep Purple have left in the tank?

This is the last major world tour. I'm not saying we're retiring – if people are still fit and want to do it, there's no reason why we couldn't cherry-pick some one-off dates. But a world tour just takes too much of your time. Making another record some time a couple of years down the road could fun, if we have the ideas and if Ian's voice retains its magnificence. Then again, it could all end tomorrow. Who bloody knows? 🎸

*Deep Purple's latest album *Infinite* is out now.*



Ian Paice in early Purple days: one of the great drummers of the era.

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ROCK HAMMER PROG BLUES

THE ITALIAN



Premiata Forneria Marconi in London in 1975: Franco Mussida, Franz Di Cioccio, Flavio Premoli, Mauro Pagani, Patrick Djivas.

JOB

Their music blew the bloody doors off in the US in the 70s, and elsewhere, **Premiata Forneria Marconi**, aka PFM, remain one of the great trailblazers of European prog rock.

Words: **Rob Hughes**



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“The English music press didn’t know what to make of us. They didn’t think Italian bands could play progressive rock.”

Franz Di Cioccio

Greg Lake was knocked out. Having listened to a cassette of tracks by a band called Premiata Forneria Marconi that he was presented with during ELP’s tour of Italy, he couldn’t wait to hear more. Back home in

London, he phoned their manager, Franco Mamone.

“Greg Lake told him: ‘I can’t believe they can play like this! It’s not possible! Not even King Crimson play *21st Century Schizoid Man* the way they do,’” recalls PFM’s drummer and lead vocalist, Franz Di Cioccio. “He said he wanted to see it for himself.”

In December 1972, Lake duly flew over to attend the launch party for *Per Un Amico*, the group’s second LP, at the PalaEUR in Rome. He even jammed with them on stage during their encore. A few months later, Lake arranged a showcase gig at the ABC Theatre, ELP’s rehearsal space in West London.

“We went over there and they all just loved it,” Di Cioccio recalls. “Greg Lake came up to us when we were finished and told us: ‘We’re doing this new label called Manticore and we’d love you to join us.’ He said that we reminded him of King Crimson, but also loved the fact that we were Italian and put a different edge on things. The English music press didn’t know what to make of us. To them, Italy meant opera and Verdi – classical music. They didn’t think Italian bands could play progressive rock. We were the first to come to England and play like that.”

Having signed to Manticore and become known as the more user-friendly PFM, the band were introduced to former King Crimson lyricist Pete Sinfield, then fresh from producing Roxy Music’s debut album. Sinfield set about reinterpreting the bulk of the songs from *Per Un Amico* with English lyrics. The resulting album, *Photos Of Ghosts*, released in October 1973, broke PFM on an international scale – they became the first Italian rock act to crack the *Billboard* album chart in the US.

PFM hung out with A-list rock stars, courted royalty and packed audiences in wherever they played. They looked set to be huge. But circumstances dictated that instead they became a cult phenomenon, a unique proposition adored by the prog-rock cognoscenti. “We were different to all the other bands around us,” states Di Cioccio. “Nobody played like we did.”

PFM emerged from the Italian pop scene of the mid-to-late 60s. Di Cioccio, guitarist Franco Mussida, keyboard player Flavio Premoli and bassist Giorgio Piazza had been the Italian equivalent of America’s Wrecking Crew, an elite team of session men who appeared on countless recordings by Italian artists. By 1968 they’d decided to pool their talents as I Quelli (rough translation: Those Guys), whose sole album included covers of Traffic and The Nice. The arrival of flautist Mauro Pagani in 1970 led to the formation of Premiata Forneria Marconi (translation: Award-winning Marconi Bakery) and a radical new approach.

“The progressive music scene in Italy wasn’t really happening,” Di Cioccio explains. “But there were a lot of bands coming here to tour who had a new way of playing music. And we were the first people to understand that something was changing. Our manager was also the biggest promoter in Italy, so we were the opening act for bands like Deep Purple, Yes, Uriah Heep and Genesis. We used to do covers, but we’d also do our own songs, with a lot of improvisation. We wanted to break with the past, and that was the start of Italian progressive rock.”

Energised by the sounds of King Crimson, Ekseption, Jethro Tull and others, PFM began their ➤

|||||

“The Queen Mother asked us to play something on the Moog. She was really cute.”

Patrick Djivas

own adventures in prog, creating a rich alloy of post-psychedelic rock and traditional classicism. Signed to RCA offshoot Numero Uno, they enjoyed a sizeable Italian hit with their debut single, *Impressioni di Settembre*. Crucially, it was the first commercially successful song in their home country to feature a synthesiser.

“At the time, the Moog synthesiser was just coming out,” Di Cioccio remembers. “We went to their distributor in Italy and asked if they would give us a Minimoog. We told him that the song was going to be popular and he’d probably sell fifty Minimoogs because of it. So he let us have it. In the end he sold two thousand of them.”

Another key component of PFM’s music was the Mellotron. Its range of sounds, as popularised originally by The Beatles and the Moody Blues, opened up a whole other index of possibilities for PFM, as heard on debut album *Storia Di Un Minuto* and its follow-up *Per Un Amico*, both released in ’72.

After ELP had signed them up for Manticore, PFM reworked one of *Storia Di Un Minuto*’s more exuberant moments, *È Festa*, for inclusion on *Photos Of Ghosts as Celebration*, a breathless romp of galloping synths and hefty prog, with a brief interlude of woodwinds and strings. “*Celebration* comes from an Italian dance, the tarantella,” Di Cioccio explains. “American music tends to come from the blues, whereas we had classical music over here, plus the feeling of Italian music from the south which gives us our sense of melody. Even the way we improvised was different, because we used very little blues language.”

Championed by DJs John Peel and Bob Harris, its impact was enough to secure PFM a spot on that year’s Reading Festival, where they shared a bill that also included Genesis, the Faces and Rory Gallagher. Patrick Djivas replaced Piazza as bassist later in ’73, and they kept the momentum going by recording another album, *L’Isola di Niente*.

Its English-language companion was *The World Became The World* (again with lyrics by Sinfield), which broadened their symphonic reach by adding elements of jazz-rock. At its heart was the largely improvised marvel *Four Holes In The Ground*.

“When he heard that song, Keith Emerson came up to us and said: ‘This is one of the greatest prog songs ever written,’” Djivas recalls. “When songs come from Italian culture, you have to shape



them in a way that should be structured inside rock’n’roll. That’s what was special about PFM.”

Eager to capitalise on PFM’s international success, Manticore sent them out on an extensive US tour in the summer of 1974. American audiences thrilled to their intense, jubilant live shows, where they opened for bands including Santana and Aerosmith. “We played our hottest stuff in concert,” says Djivas.

“It was very heavy and the audiences would go crazy. They loved us. They’d be standing on their seats and yelling for an encore. Some bands felt upstaged, though.

Our manager took us aside and said: ‘Listen. We should never arrive late and never play one minute more than we’re allowed to. They can’t fire you for kicking their arse every night, but they can fire you for those other things.’ So we were very precise about everything.”

“Santana were fantastic with us,” continues Djivas.

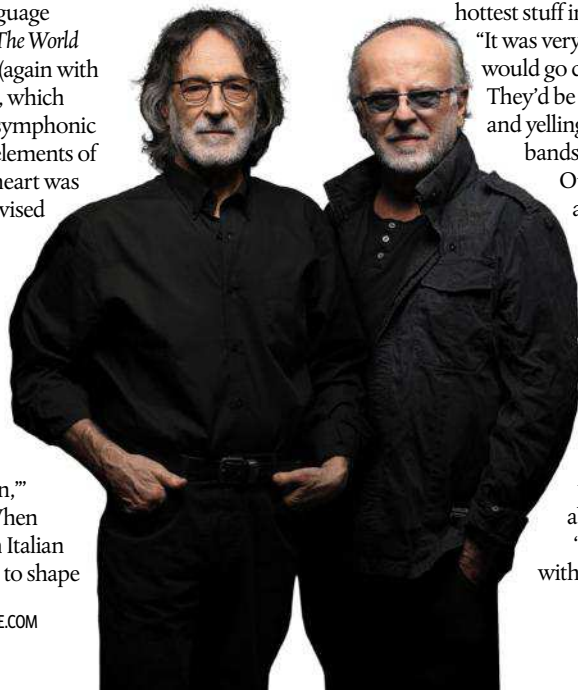
“They saw that the audience was going crazy and shouting ‘PFM! PFM!’ so the next night they decided to see for themselves what was happening. And they loved us. They ended up dropping a song from their set so that PFM could do an encore.”

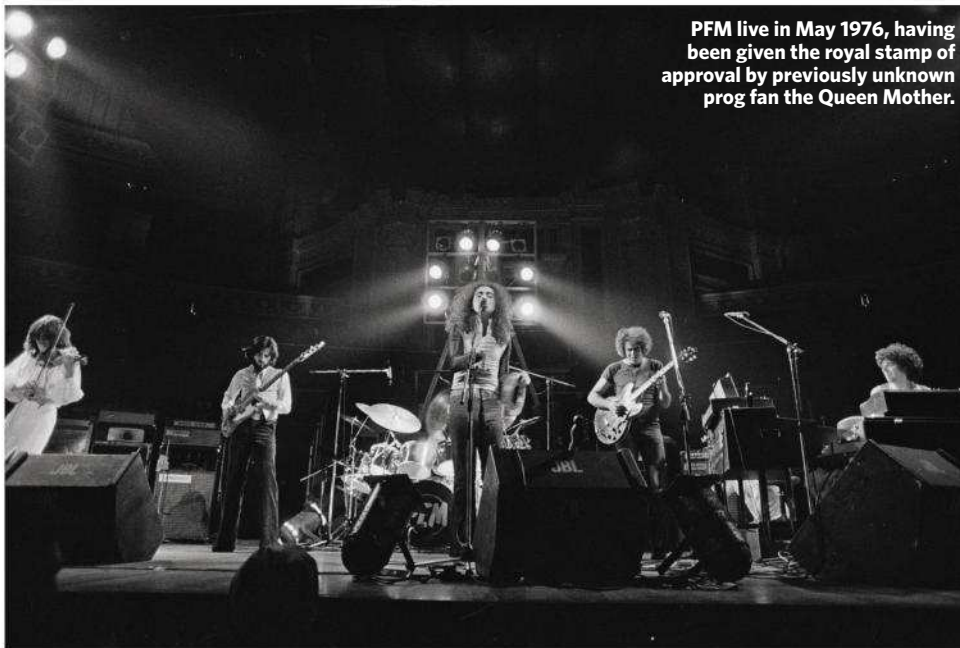
Life on the road wasn’t without its temptations, of course, but PFM tended to avoid the usual trappings of rock’n’roll.

“A lot of the bands would be taking drugs, but our big thing was food,” Djivas says. “The bands we were playing with would often stay at the same hotel, and would come over to our room, attracted by this great smell. We’d be cooking spaghetti, we’d have a little wine and all start singing. Aerosmith used to come to our room every night for spaghetti. Steven Tyler would be singing and laughing all the time. We used to do little theatre pieces in our room, where we did imitations of Elvis Presley and Sha Na Na, and they were having so much fun.

“The two brothers at Atlantic Records, Ahmet and Nesuhi [Ertegun], were big enemies at the time and hadn’t talked to each other in years. But they got together one night on our floor, eating spaghetti with plastic forks and having a good time. And all the other people at Atlantic were freaking out. We had so many times like that. Girls would be going past our room: ‘Hello, is there a party over here?’”

PFM captured their blazing live shows of ’74 on *Cook*, released later that year. Recorded in Toronto





PFM live in May 1976, having been given the royal stamp of approval by previously unknown prog fan the Queen Mother.

and New York, and topped off with the 15-minute free jam *Alta Loma 5 Till 9*, it was titled *Live In U.S.A.* for the European market. The press junket for Cook, fittingly, was held at a top restaurant, where 200 invited guests were served risotto and pasta – made by Mussida and Di Cioccio – in the colours of the Italian flag. Cook did the business in the US charts too, in a year in which PFM played in front of more than 200,000 people at the August Jam in North Carolina, alongside ELP and the Allman Brothers.

Indeed, PFM toured the States so frequently that they set up home in LA, either holing up just off the Sunset Strip or staying at celebrated rock hangout the Sunset Marquis. “There was a party every night,” Di Cioccio remembers. “[Jazz bass player] Jaco Pastorius used to come over after recording with Joni Mitchell during the day. We’d be hanging out with lots of musicians, like Jaco or Frank Zappa. I think they liked PFM because we were different.”

The band’s love affair with the US cooled somewhat following 1975’s *Chocolate Kings*. Their first studio album without an Italian counterpart, its cover featured a bar of chocolate in a torn wrapper printed with the American flag, the back cover the wrapper scrunched into a ball. The sarcastic connotations of this visual prank were also mirrored in some of the record’s lyrics.

“We had a few problems with it in the States,” Djivas concedes. “They didn’t like it that much, especially with an American flag on the cover. But it depended which side you were on. Many of the kids loved it, because they agreed with the way we used the flag.”

“It was meant to be ironic, not offensive,” adds Di Cioccio.

Suffice to say, sales there took a bump.

It was very different in the UK, though. *Chocolate Kings* made the Top 20, PFM undertook a sell-out tour, and in *Melody Maker*’s year-end poll, the band came second in the Brightest Hope category, ahead of Supertramp and the Eagles. They ended 1975 with a hugely successful string of dates in Japan.

In April ’76 they appeared on BBC TV music programme *The Old*

Grey Whistle Test. “We did a seven-minute version of *Celebration*,” remembers Djivas. “At the end, [presenter] Bob Harris, who hardly ever made any comments, went: ‘Phew!’ Everyone was talking about it the day after.”

Another unlikely ally came along a month later, when PFM were rehearsing for a headline show at the Royal Albert Hall.

“At a certain point we noticed all this commotion,” says Djivas. “All the English roadies stopped what they were doing and just stared.”

Di Cioccio adds: “We didn’t know what was happening. Then this old lady came on stage and started talking to us. It was the Queen Mother. She said she liked what she’d heard and wanted to know everything: ‘What’s that instrument? What’s this one?’ Then she asked us to play something on the Moog. She was really cute.”

The Queen Mother’s official photographer took a photo of her chatting to Djivas, who was wearing a Gibson T-shirt. “The next day I got a call at my hotel from Gibson,” he recalls. “Because of the Queen Mother connection, they wanted to offer me an endorsement deal with them. So they started giving me plenty of basses and flew me all over the world.”

The influence of the jazz musicians that PFM were hanging out with in LA was keenly felt on their next album, 1977’s *Jet Lag*. It was a watershed record in several ways. “We never made records with the idea of trying to sell lots of them,” Djivas explains. “Everybody told us we were really crazy: ‘You’re about to explode in America and you decide to do a jazz album?!’ But we were like: ‘Yeah, this is what we want to do at this moment.’”

Jet Lag also had a wider significance. “Because we’d done an English version of *Chocolate Kings*, rather than an Italian one, we knew it would be difficult for the fans back home in Italy to understand the meaning of the songs,” says Di Cioccio. “For us it was about

cultural jet lag. We spent part of the year in Los Angeles, so there was always this question about when we would go back.”

Homesickness had also become an issue for several band members. PFM took a democratic decision and returned to Italy. *Jet Lag* was their last album with lyrics in English.

PFM went on to re-establish themselves in Italy, where they set up their own label, Zoo, before the band members went their separate ways in 1987. There were no serious divisions, just a cordial consensus that each of them needed to try their own things or spend more time at home. As if to underscore the tone of this split, PFM were keen to assert that they never officially disbanded. Mussida opened a jazz academy, others did solo projects, others wrote for TV and film. PFM reunited a decade later and released a series of live and studio albums, but last year’s *Emotional Tattoos* is their first all-new album in more than 10 years. What’s more, it marks a return to their 70s heyday, in that it comprises two separate albums: one in Italian, the other in English.

It also happens to be a spectacular return to form, with its deliciously wonky time signatures, fluid guitar rhythms, diving keyboard riffs and a celebratory sense of vitality. There is, too, the odd reference to PFM’s own journey: “*La Danza Degli Specchi* is the story of PFM in Italian,” explains Di Cioccio, the current band’s sole original member. “We start with the blues and arrive at classical music. When we sing: ‘*La musica è potente, è tutto un solo continente*,’ it means that the music is everything, it’s powerful.”

In contrast, its English-language equivalent, *A Day We Share*, is an eco-political hymn that

hits a universal nerve. Like most things PFM turn their hand to, it’s evidence that *Emotional Tattoos* works on a number of different levels.

PFM seem to have retained the instincts that made them so spectacular back in their heyday. Di Cioccio and Djivas continue to steer the seven-piece, now made

up of relatively new additions, into bold new territory. This is illustrated beautifully on the front cover of *Emotional Tattoos*, which depicts the two old-stagers in the cockpit of a new age spaceship, arriving at some fabulous fantasy world full of giant vegetation and winged creatures. “Patrick and me are like Han Solo and Chewbacca in *Star Wars*!” proclaims Di Cioccio.

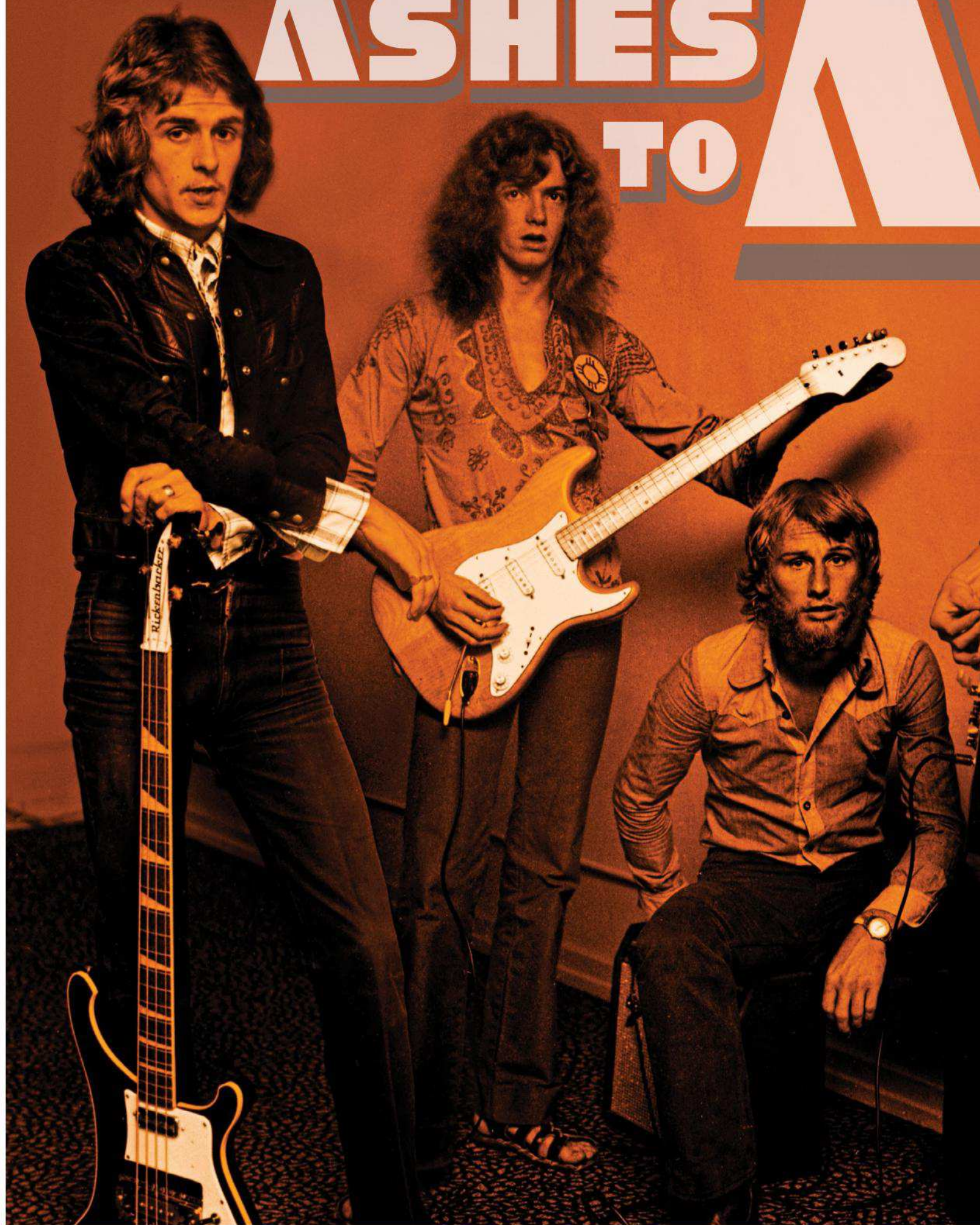
Their music might still be too pan-dimensional for less demanding mainstream tastes, but they remain heroes in their own country. Further afield, their legend is assured as one of the great trailblazers of European prog rock. Currently on an extensive world tour, playing in South America, the US and Europe, PFM are clearly far from finished.

“We’re so satisfied right now,” Djivas says. “This album made number one in the Italian charts, and for many years we hadn’t been able to do that. For a band who’ve been going for over forty-five years, it’s truly amazing to be back.”

Emotional Tattoos is out now via InsideOut. PFM play Southampton The 1865 May 16, and London Islington 02 Academy 17.



ASHES TO



WISHBONE ASH



With their unique twin-guitar sound, **Wishbone Ash** conquered both sides of the Atlantic and charted with some classics. The band's members recall the highs, and reflect on where it all went wrong.

Words: **Mick Wall**

Sunday, August 24, 1975. The final night of the Reading Festival weekend. Cold, dark, wet, horrible. Typical British festival weather. We don't care. We're used to it. We're long-haired, flared-jeaned, denim-faded 70s rock fans and we've come prepared: white cider, black hash, pasty yellow sulphate and – for the hard-core – cowshit-encrusted magic mushrooms.

The rain can piss down all it likes – we're already strafing the heavens. Why? The Ash, man! Here they roll like thunder through the stately overture to *Phoenix*, then careen off into the unknown with a new, as-yet unreleased epic that we learn later is called *Rest In Peace*. Behold as they cast the largest Reading festival crowd for five years under their spell, entwined guitars planet-hopping through the night; tripping on godhead through *The King Will Come... Warrior... Persephone... Time Was... Blowin' Free...* all the way back to the bosom of *Phoenix*. Coming full circle. The journey over where it began. Like life itself, man. Strange, isn't it? Weird. Far fucking out.

Right, Andy?

"Well," says Wishbone Ash guitarist Andy Powell now, "I can't honestly say I recall that show as one of our absolute best, but yes, we did see our music as taking a journey, if you like. It was the era we came from. A sort of golden age where a whole new generation of musicians were seriously starting to explore music, as opposed to trying to come up with three-minute hit singles. We wanted to progress from that. All the bands making albums did back then."

So too their fast-evolving audiences. Which is why we all loved those bands so much and why we could never quite outgrow them, even as the years zipped by and rock's snot-nosed children laughed at what they saw as the effete pomposity of it all. It's why for so many of us, the words 'Dear Fluff' still bring back memories of a time when real music warriors were all blowin' free on joint-rolling titans like the Ash, the Heep, Hawkwind and others of their ilk – somewhat below the interstellar success of Zep, Yes and the Floyd, but still way above the ken of simple pop oafs who wouldn't know a chillum from a Hobbit.

"We were very young, of course, when the band first became successful," says Powell, on the phone from an

airport somewhere in Germany where he's still on tour with Ash, still combing the musical cosmos for signs of other-world life. "And I think we sort of expected it to last for ever."

And yet, for Wishbone Ash, that triumphant Reading Festival headline appearance was, in retrospect, the beginning of the end. It was the last time, certainly, that they would still be considered champions of real-deal British rock.

"I don't want to say the rot had set in," says Powell, "but, well, you know..."

Adope smoke-filled basement in St John's Wood: posh London, 1969. For Martin Turner, a 23-year-old bassist and singer from Torquay, fate has finally come a-calling.

"We were very into what we used to call 'positive thinking'," he says now. "It's a bit like instructing your subconscious to provide what you're after, whether it's a song or whether it's to travel the world. The idea is, if you do it right, it will manifest. There was a strong element of that, like a magical process that did come about. We kind of created our own reality."

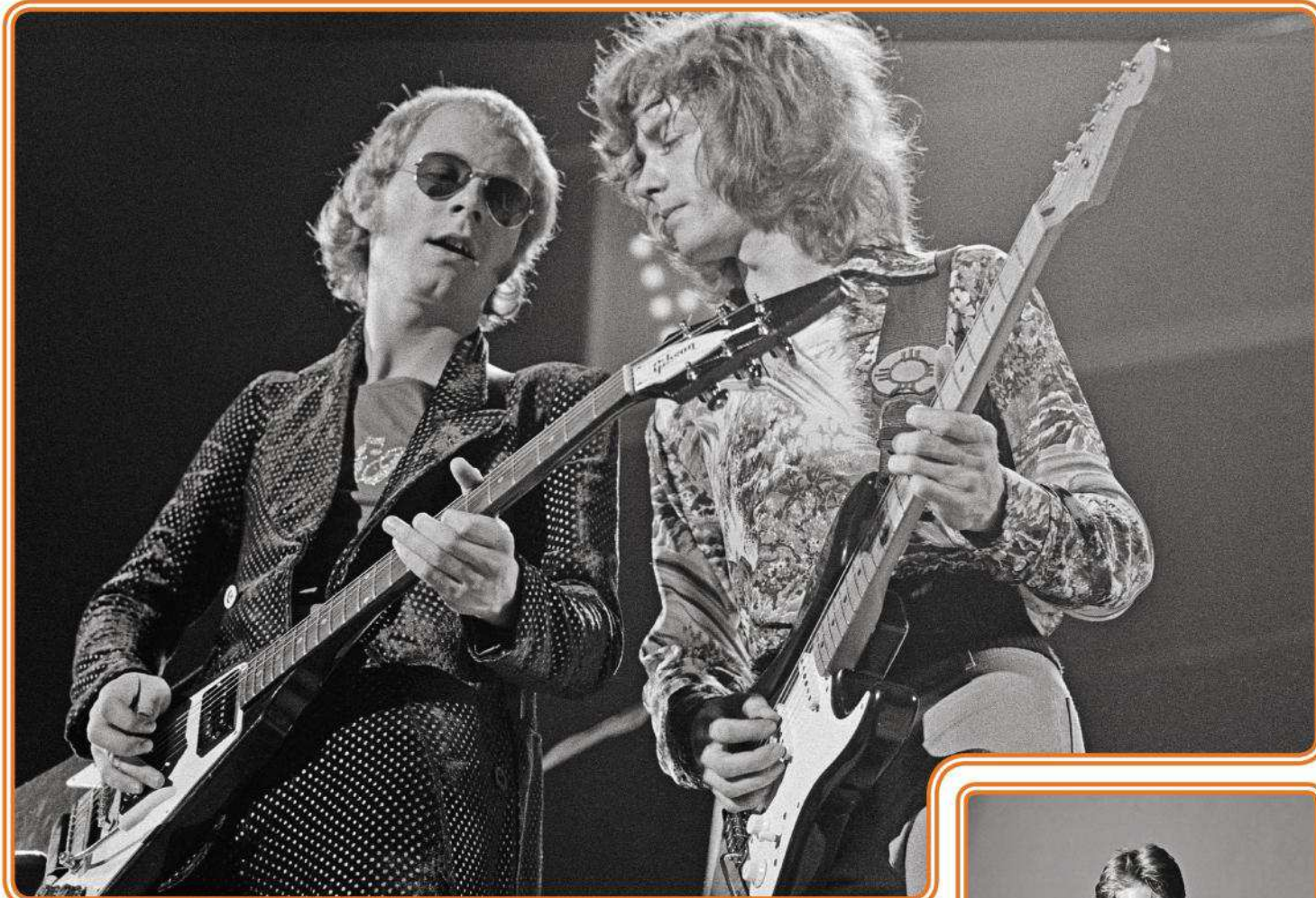
Turner certainly seems to have created his – not least when he recalls the genesis of the twin-guitar sound that would become Wishbone Ash's signature.

"I came up with the idea of two guitars – harmony guitars, lead guitars together. Not an entirely original concept. But I'd invited Ted Turner and Andy Powell to come back for a second audition together, and it was just absolutely obvious that it was gonna work."

Hit pause here while we consider the rather different recollections of the other three founding members of the band. First off, drummer Steve Upton, who back then had journeyed up to London from the Devonshire wilds with Martin and his younger guitar-playing brother, Glenn, just weeks before.

At 24, Upton was already a muso veteran; at 18 he'd done a three-month tour of England and West Germany, including a stint in Hamburg playing five sets a night, six nights a week. "It was grim," he recalls. "Shooters going off in the street, musicians lying on dirty mattresses with the clap."

Back in Blighty in 1964, he joined a group called The Devarks, playing blues and covers. This was when the Turner brothers, Martin and Glenn, first saw ➤



Steve play. Months later, a chance meeting in a late-night café called Dirty Dot's led to talk of forming a group. A week later they were doing gigs, under the name the Empty Vessels, getting £2 a gig.

Steve got Martin a driving job in a pick-up truck. Then Martin fell asleep early one morning, and smashed into a car with a woman and a baby on board.

"Thankfully no one was hurt," says Martin. "But it was one of those moments of clarity where you say: 'I can't do this driving job and be a jobbing musician.' I said: 'I'm not doing this any more. We've got to be professional musicians.'"

And so the three Empty Vessels took off for London, up the A303, using money Upton had secretly squirrelled away from their gigs – almost £100, which was a nice pot in those days.

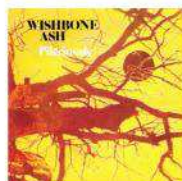
They found digs in Gloucester Avenue, near Primrose Hill. "A room with a loo down the corridor, basically." Knowing no one, doing nothing, "it was really tough at first", Martin says now. "It was really tough at first and that's when Glenn left."

Martin was distraught. "My brother was asthmatic from day one, and I had been trained by my mother to look out for him. I spent every day of my life with him, and for him to leave the band and for me to think in terms of being in a band without him was tough."

So tough that Martin was considering throwing in the towel too and following

Blowin' free: Andy Powell (left) and Ted Turner hit the harmony highs at Alexandra Palace, London, December 1973.

Right: shy, retiring Martin Turner gives the camera plenty of rock star at a shoot in Westport, Connecticut, July 1975.

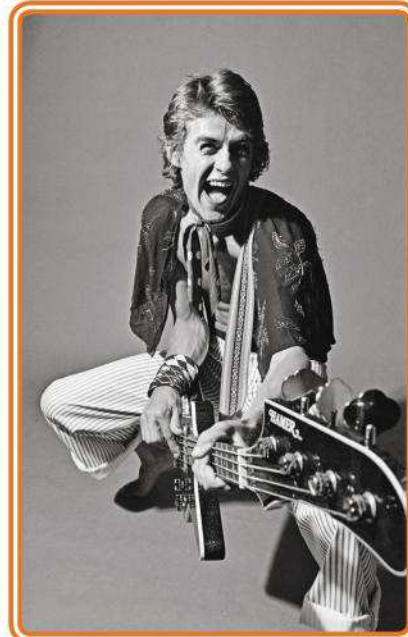


Glenn home. "I remember walking with Martin up to Primrose Hill, looking out across London," says Upton. "He's saying: 'I don't know if I want to continue.' I just put my arm round him and said: 'Listen, Mart, if Glenn had said he didn't want to come, or he wasn't going to come, or he was gonna be a flake, we'd never have come. He's got us here. That's what that was all about, whether he's with us now or not. We're here and we'll carry on.' He said: 'I'll think about it.' I thought: 'Jesus Christ! Cos I wanted to go forward with this. So it was difficult.'"

Fortunately, the last gig they had played with Glenn – then going under the name Tanglewood, at the Country Club in Haverstock Hill – had resulted in a meeting with a very odd-looking American chap, with blond-white Andy Warhol hair and horn-rimmed glasses, who was about to change their lives.

His name was Miles Copeland. A decade later, Miles would help take his drummer brother Stewart's band The Police to vast global success. In 1969, however, he had just graduated in economics from the American University in Beirut, and had returned to London, where he'd been born in 1944, on the lookout for ways to get into the crazy world of rock'n'roll.

Copeland was exceptional in other ways too, Turner remembers. "Miles was a super-straight guy. He didn't do drugs. He didn't even drink alcohol. Ask him



what he wanted to drink and he'd say a glass of milk." Or as Upton puts it, "From the blazer and the horn-rimmed glasses to the haircut, we thought: 'Who is this?'"

They would soon find out. Miles gave them his card. The next day, Glenn took off for home. The day after that they rang Miles. He invited them over to his house, one of those three-storey villas in Marlboro Place, St John's Wood.

After they'd spilled their tale of woe, Miles simply told them to go down into the basement and start playing, while he placed an ad in the back pages of *Melody Maker* for a new guitarist.

"We auditioned every guitar player that was available in London," Turner recalls,

"WE CAME FROM A GOLDEN AGE WHERE A NEW GENERATION OF MUSICIANS WERE SERIOUSLY STARTING TO EXPLORE MUSIC."

ANDY POWELL

"and we weren't happy with anyone. Some of them were overqualified, shall we say. We wanted guys the same as us that didn't have history, that were starting out from scratch."

Enter 19-year-old Andrew 'Andy' Powell. Born in edgy East London, brought up in homey Hemel Hempstead, Powell had been in soul bands, covers bands, all kinds of different pub pleasers. As he says now: "It was a real apprenticeship I went through, so I was very pragmatic."

Pragmatic, talented, capable, Powell seemed the perfect choice. Even though Turner and Upton had already auditioned another very obviously talented player named Ted Turner (no relation).

"We'd seen Ted and he was good," says Upton. "We seriously thought about offering him the gig, but he was very young and we weren't sure. Then Andy came in and was obviously a good player and seemed very amenable to the whole thing. He went home and we said: 'Well, that's it, we've got the guy.'"

Ted Turner was 19, lived at home in Birmingham with his mum and dad, and had only been playing guitar for two years. His only previous group experience was in local act the King Biscuit Blues Band; he "probably played about twenty gigs with them. Lots of giggles and youthful passion."

He didn't like school, so left early. Did a variety of bum jobs. Didn't like them either. Hated Birmingham. "I just wanted to leave everything behind."

His only hope: the guitar, which he was "totally consumed by". The first band he ever saw live was Cream. "That was kind of mind-blowing." A week later, at a tiny club under a viaduct, he saw Peter Green (who had replaced Eric Clapton) playing with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. "That had a really profound impact on me."

Steve Upton recalls how when Martin rang Ted to let him know they had chosen someone else for the gig, he got Ted's mum on the phone instead. And she wasn't happy. "She gave Martin a right earful. She said Ted was devoted to music. He did nothing other than carry his guitar with him everywhere. He played it constantly. 'You've got to give him a chance. You won't regret it.'"

"Okay, so he came down again. We put Andy and Ted together, and it seemed to work. Martin coaxed things out of them, because he was very much the

musical director. He would orchestrate the things. And it all just came together. It immediately felt very, very right to us. So we thought, all right, this is it. We'll do it this way."

Ted was a purist. He likens joining Wishbone Ash as "like Dorothy in the *Wizard Of Oz*". Learning to play alongside Andy came as a revelation.

"For me it was challenging, which I loved. It did work quickly for us, though. It was like a natural fit. It was like yin and yang. It was a really good combination of different styles. I was far more economical, melodic, soulful, Andy was more energetic, playing a lot more notes. But we met in the middle."

So, not quite as Martin remembers it then?

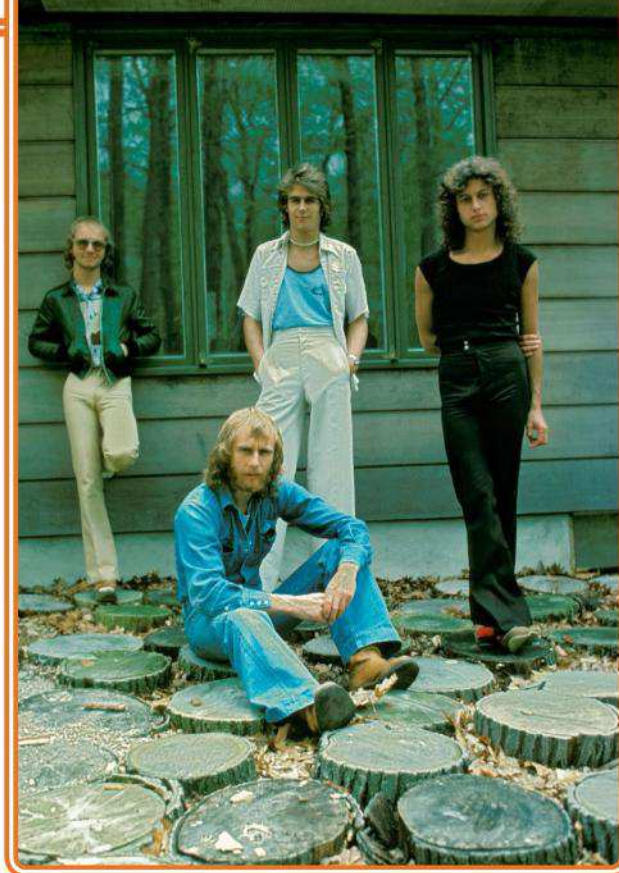
Powell chuckles. "The important thing is we had chemistry," he says. "Ted was this beautiful-looking lad who had still been living at home. Martin always saw himself as a rock star and as an artiste. My role was really to facilitate that. But the triumvirate of Martin, Steve and Miles really was a partnership. So we had this perfect combination."

The band had found their name from writing down words, then pulling them into a hat. Of the first two that Martin took out, the first piece of paper had the word 'Wishbone' on it. The second had 'Ash'.

They had found their fame almost as easily. Miles fast-talked booking agency NEMS into scoring the Wishbone Ash a string of gigs opening for Slade, T.Rex, Taste, Caravan, Mott The Hoople... He then paid for them to go into Advision studios London to make an album-length demo. Between recording dates, they played in Paris for a week. Then in May 1970, Wishbone Ash played the gig that would help secure them their record deal, opening for Deep Purple at Dunstable Civic Hall.

Purple guitarist Ritchie Blackmore was so impressed by them that he told Derek Lawrence to check out the band. Lawrence was an old-school producer who had worked with everyone from Joe Meek to The Pretty Things, Jethro Tull – and Deep Purple. He knew the stone-faced Blackmore didn't make recommendations lightly, so he got in touch with the band, via Copeland, and went down to see them rehearse in the St John's Wood basement.

"Derek came down and immediately got what we were about," says Martin. "He said he had this friend that had just



The show must go on: Ash with Ted Turner's replacement Laurie Wisefild (far right).

been made head of A&R at MCA/Decca in Los Angeles. Derek said: 'If you buy me a ticket to fly out there, I'll take your demo with me and I guarantee that I will bring you back a decent record deal.' Which he did. Then he was written in to produce the first three albums."

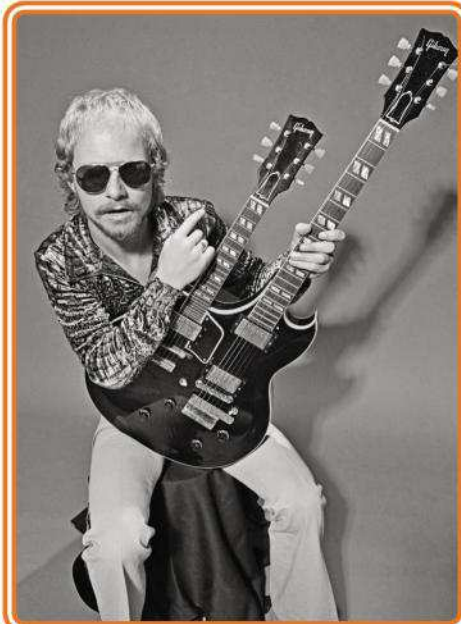
In fact, the deal the band signed when they flew out to LA in August 1970 was more than "decent", with an advance of a whopping 250,000 dollars – around 1.5 million dollars in today's money – an enormous sum at the time for a completely unknown band. With that kind of outlay, though, came a demand for total commitment, on both sides of the pond.

"We had an American manager," Martin Turner says. "We were signed to an American label. And from day one we were dashing backwards and forwards across the Atlantic, touring and building things up. A lot of people in America thought we were an American band in the early days."

Listening back now to their self-titled debut album, released in December 1970, it's easy to see where that confusion came from: it was those spiralling twin lead guitars. Nothing like the chug (Keith Richards) and whirl (Mick Taylor) of the Stones, and far more off-the-leash than Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck ever achieved in their time in harness in The Yardbirds, the sound of Andy Powell and Ted Turner weaving their sonic tapestries in 1970 was closer to that of the Allman Brothers Band or the then just-released Derek And The Dominos album *Layla & Other Assorted Love Songs*, neither of which anyone in Wishbone Ash had even heard back then.

As the popular Radio 1 DJ and taste maker John Peel remarked to his listeners at the time: "I heard Wishbone Ash for the first time and haven't been so ➤"





impressed with a relatively new band for a long time. Their music is original, exciting and beautifully played."

Indeed the sheer exuberance of tracks like *Blind Eye* and *Lady Whiskey* was dazzling. Funky in a purely far-out way, heavy in a wonderfully don't-mess sense, heart-swaying in a leg-kicking, watch-me-go kind of devil dance, it's difficult to believe even now that this is the work of newbies and ne'er-do-wells.

Then you came to side two. Comprising two monumental tracks in the 11-minute-plus *Handy* and the 10-minute-plus *Phoenix*, this was album-oriented rock at its apotheosis: making full use of the cultural zeitgeist, of space and time and mind-travel, to produce music for a new decade, going from the black-and-white TV of the rule-bending 60s to the blurred-around-the-edges colour TV of the give-a-shit 70s.

As Andy Powell says now: "There was this mystery to it all. We were very much aware that we were a closed society, along with other bands. We were dipping into a mysterious world. Once we dabbled in these worlds, taking references from literature, the Bible, we didn't necessarily know why we were doing it. We just decided to throw it all in the pot.

"Our very first logo that appeared in *Melody Maker* was a couple of witches throwing stuff into a giant cauldron. It was mystical and hobbits and the Bible and the Koran, and it was drugs and it was... yeah, we didn't really know what we were doing. We knew it was mystical and that it was impacting people in that way. And if we didn't know exactly, we knew the audiences would be equally as fuzzy and make of it what they will. That was part of the amazing thing about it – the coming of age we felt both our audience and us was going through. It was a powerful thing."

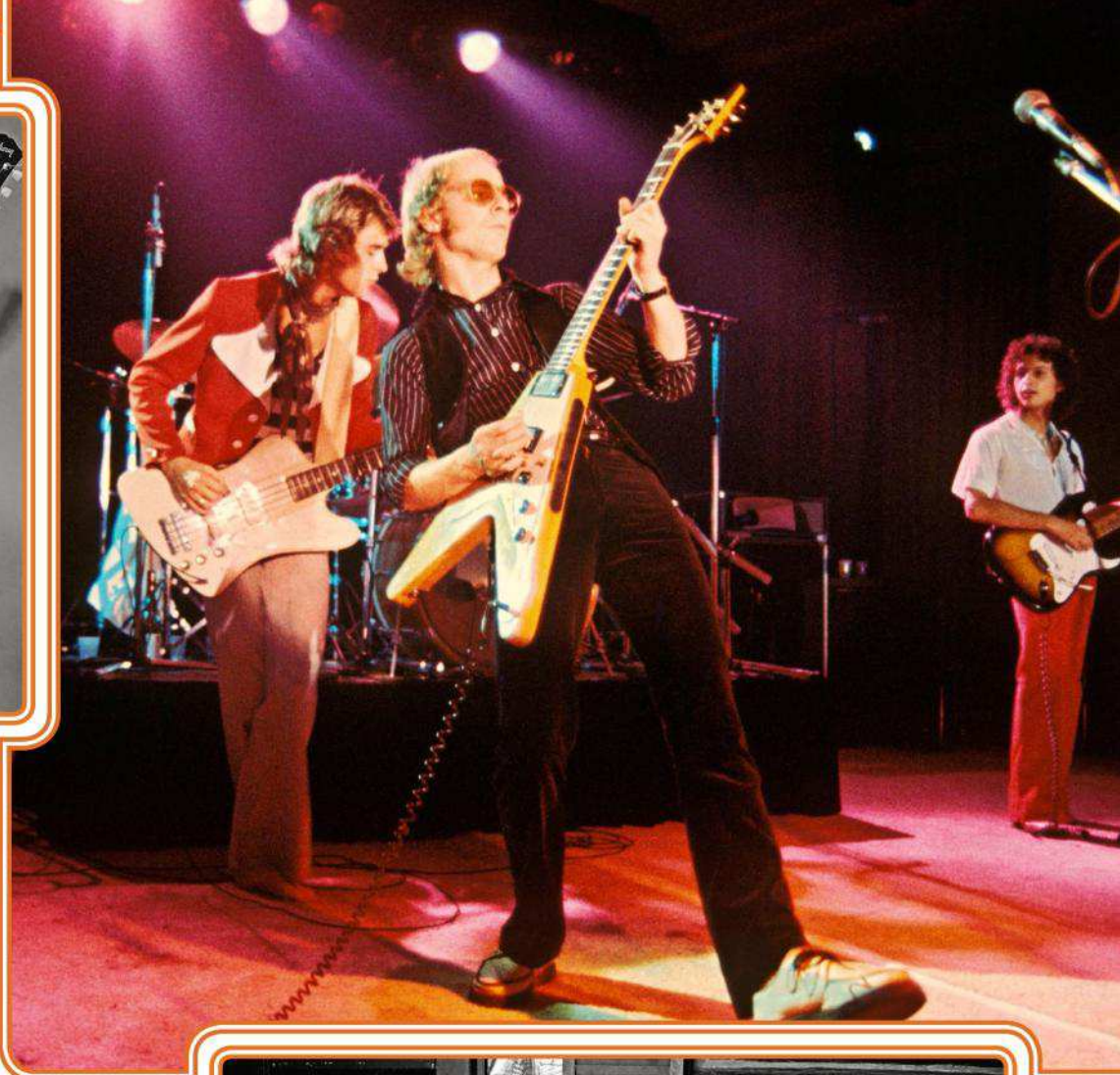
For Martin Turner, there was also the sense of purpose, of destiny.

"For a mere bass player, I was very pushy. If I'd written something, I didn't want anyone messing with it. Andy would say: 'Why don't we change this?' And we'd

Powell and Wisefield never matched the chemistry of the Powell/Ted Turner original pairing.

Above left: Andy Powell shows off his Gibson EMS-1235 Double Mandolin twin-neck guitar, December 1975.

Sitting pretty in Westport, Connecticut, June 1975: (l to r) Steve Upton, Martin Turner, Laurie Wisefield, Andy Powell.



end up with the same song but with the chords in a different order. I'm like: 'No! That's not what I had in mind. If you want to use the song, use it as it was written, or not at all.'

The band contained four strong personalities, but it was Martin who saw himself as the whip cracker. The musical director. The leader.

"I would say to them sometimes: 'Just shut up and do what I'm telling you to do and then we can all get home for dinner.' That wasn't always the formula, but someone had to point the way. We didn't always do it that way, though. A lot of the early stuff were extended sessions where it would have been a jam that we recorded on a tape recorder and there would be one

little section that we really liked, and we would then build on that."

He cites *Phoenix* – the epic number that would become for Wishbone Ash what *Stairway To Heaven* would become for Led Zeppelin, or *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* for Pink Floyd – as the prime example.

"That was a series of those pieces that had occurred on various improvised jam sessions, which we all learned to play in one continuous stream."

And which they would take several steps further when they played it live on stage. "A tune that was originally eight minutes could end up being ten or twelve, sometimes longer. It depended."

Depended on what?
"On everything..."

A second Wishbone Ash album, *Pilgrimage*, again produced by Derek Lawrence, was released in September 1971. And though it lacked the ground-breaking grandeur of their debut, it went straight into the UK Top 20. The band were touring in America that winter as the opening act for The Who when they got the news that two music magazines back home in England – *Sounds* and *Melody Maker* – had named them Best New Band. Life was good.

"We were all young men," says Martin. "A couple of us had girlfriends. But we hadn't reached that point yet where you're bogged down with properties and family and children. We were all free to go wherever and do whatever we wanted, which we did."

Party time? Yes and no. Martin was the rock star of the band. All the pretty girls loved Martin.

"I was kind of braver, I think, than the other guys," he says. "They were a little bit more conservative than me. I would get up to all sorts. Every bloody town we went to, we would get back to the hotel after the gig and I'd be ready to go clubbing. There's always a bar in every town rocking until two in the morning. But nobody else did. It was me on my own."

Andy Powell, again, remembers things a little differently.

"I never really thought of the band as a drug band. But when I think back now and talk to some promoters, they tell me: 'We knew we had to have everything on hand for when you came in.' The first time we went to America, the limo driver offered us a cigarette box full of joints. In those days that was normal. At the same time, you'd actually have a couple of cops on Harley-Davidsons as outriders."

"There was a lot of that stuff around. There were a lot of 'old ladies' [professional groupies, à la Elton's *Tiny Dancer*]. You were just full of euphoria at being this impervious little entity. I actually had to reconstruct about ten years in my thirties, because I just... I knew where LA was and I knew where New York was but the rest of it was just a blur."

"There would be this routine on those tours where we would just party all night. Then maybe a couple of hours' rest and then getting to an airport – always running for planes, hungover. Then the first thing they would do on the plane was offer you a drink. 'Thanks, I'll have a Bloody Mary!' That's how you'd start your day. Then you'd get to the gig and off you go."

"Of course, there would be a lot of ladies around, a lot of wives and girlfriends on the road too. There were always a lot of people around and it was a nice feeling, a community that was our little society that would travel around together."

Wishbone Ash were also immensely cool suddenly. When John Lennon was looking for an additional guitar player while he was recording *Imagine*, he asked for Ted Turner. It was during the recording



"MARTIN ALWAYS SAW HIMSELF AS A ROCK STAR AND AS AN ARTISTE. MY ROLE WAS REALLY TO FACILITATE THAT."

ANDY POWELL

of *Pilgrimage* at Apple Studios. Ash were just finishing up for the day, past 11 at night, when Ted got a phone call.

"It was a call telling me I was wanted for some session. I said: 'Yeah, great,' thinking it was for some time in the future. So I said: 'When?' And they said: 'Right now!' I'm like: 'I've been working all day, I'm too tired for this...' They said: 'It's for John Lennon.' I said: 'Oh, right.'"

"I got picked up in a big white Rolls-Royce, [keyboard player] Nicky Hopkins is sitting in the back seat, and we're whisked off to the white mansion house – the one you see in the *Imagine* video."

"We get there, and I go into this big room with a long table in it full of food. There's some hashish there. Then I got led into the studio room. As I walk in, George Harrison is working on his guitar licks, very small, crouched over his guitar in the corner of the room."

"Then John walks in. [Liverpudlian accent] 'Everybody ready, like?' Then one-two-three-four and off you go. It was amazing. Here I am in a small room, playing with my heroes, two of The Beatles. The song was *Crippled Inside*. Sort of surreal, really."

Ted also played on *How Do You Sleep* that night, "but the guitars weren't used on it. Not the parts that I played."

It was the third Wishbone Ash album, though, that brought the band to their own perfect high. Released in April 1972,

"Does that sound in tune to you?"
Laurie Wisefield
during a US tour,
March 1976.

Argus was not only the most commercially successful album of their career – reaching No. 3 in the UK – it was also, as the men who made it still agree, their finest.

Although they don't all necessarily agree on how the album came about. Take for example the best-known track from *Argus*, the brilliantly hooky *Blowin' Free* – aka the hit single that should have been but never was, mainly because it was never released as a single. Shame.

Ted Turner recalls coming up with the memorable opening lick one day while "sitting in my tiny room at the flat in Chalk Farm. I took it to the band, they said: 'That's good,' and we just attached a twelve-bar boogie blues on to that."

Martin, meanwhile, has this to say about it: "I had the idea for that tune way back. Somewhere around sixty-eight, I think." He says it was inspired by a Steve Miller song, the title track of his 1968 debut album *Children Of The Future*. Listening to it now, you can absolutely hear the 'overlap'.

Martin continues: "That song, I was describing it to Andy and Ted and explaining how [Miller] was using this hammer-on technique with the guitar strings. They had never heard it, but we concocted from that the beginning of *Blowin' Free*, which I had the lyrical idea for from way back in the sixties. It took us a long time before we were able to get a decent recording of that."

Whoever came up with it, no one ➤



WISHBONE ASH



Golden years:
Ash manager
Miles Copeland,
January 1979.

seems able to explain why it never became the giant hit it probably should have. “The decision about whether a track should be a single or not, that was really record company stuff,” Ted says simply. “It was a very separate thing.”

It didn’t matter. Not when *Argus* had so many other cornerstone moments.

“*Argus* had a lot of big, ambitious themes, lyrically, that I’d been thinking about for many, many years,” says Martin. “The phenomenon of war, and how since the beginning of time dictators, despots, powermongers had harnessed the energy of young men to make war. And that’s what gave rise to writing the song *Warrior*.”

“Now, being a Libran, as I am, balancing the scales, I thought when I wrote it that people might think I was advocating war. So I thought, okay, I’ll write another tune to balance it out, which will be a peace song. That was *Throw Down The Sword*, which was really not far off being a hymn like I used to sing in the church when I was a head choirboy about ten years before.

“Then there was *The King Will Come*, which is the idea of orthodox Christian religion where the end of the world is nigh and the Lord, the king, will come back and save us all. I’d been pondering that for a long time. Being a young lad in the church, I had a very conflicted view. I loved the music and the peace that you experience in church, but I thought it was full of contradictions and the whole concept was bullshit, really.”

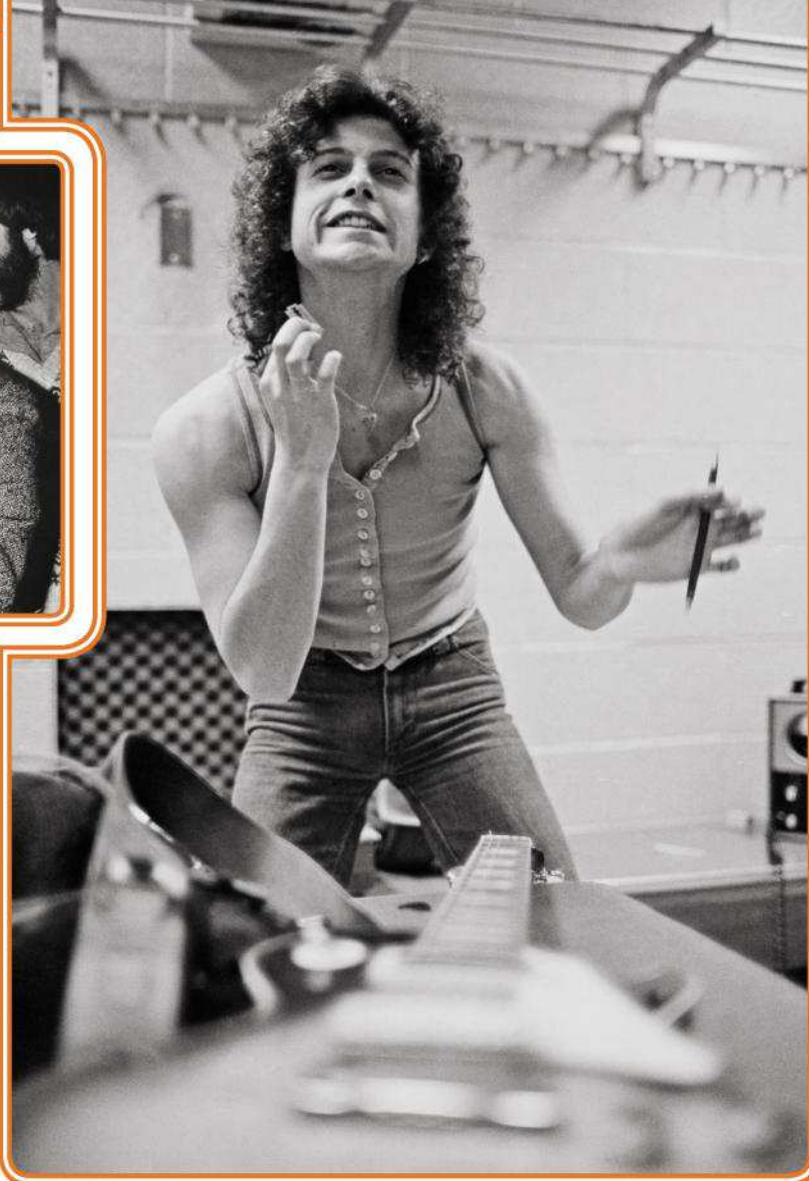
When *Sounds* voted *Argus* Album Of The Year in its annual critics’ poll, it seemed like Wishbone Ash had it made. Sell-out tours of Britain and America followed. Cash flowed their way.

“When we were touring America we were getting really great fees,” recalls Andy. “We were getting between fifteen and twenty thousand pounds a night.”

In today’s money, that would be worth around £150,000 a night. What could possibly go wrong?

The answer was two things. The first was the disappointing follow-up album, simply titled *Wishbone Four*, released in 1973. Having decided it would be a mistake to try to make, as Powell puts

Right: Laurie Wisefield backstage during the band’s 1976 US tour.



it, “a son of *Argus*”, they then made the fatal error of making an album that so deflated the expectations of an audience hoping for exactly that, that they would spend the rest of the decade trying to figure out where they went wrong. They made albums that either tried to emulate the old magic (the good-not-great *There’s The Rub* in ’74), or went off-message completely (their Tom Dowd-produced ‘American’ album, *Locked In*, in ’76).

What really derailed Ash, though, was the sudden and unexpected departure of Ted Turner in the summer of 1973.

“I was a very quiet, introverted person,” Ted says now, doing his best to explain his decision. “I was the emotional one. The dominant personalities, the egos in the band, were Martin and Andy. It got to the point where it started to feel like competitiveness had come into the band. The best of music for me is always collaboration – you listen to what everyone has to say and you go with the best ideas.

“But now people had started to go their own way. We’d all got girlfriends now. People are getting married, living in different places. We’re now starting to listen to different music, having different influences. I was listening to Weather Report and Billy Cobham. It wasn’t just about the blues any more. Then I’d go back and start playing Wishbone music and it wasn’t doing it for me. It was different.

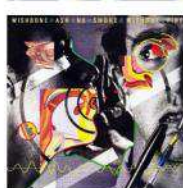
“Also, I felt that my voice wasn’t being heard within the band. I’m the kind of guy where I can’t fake it. I couldn’t compromise. I could never compromise with music – it’s sacred.

“I thought: ‘Well, there’s got to be more to life than this.’ It was a time of self-expansion. Like: ‘Who am I?’ I’m a young man exploring his spirituality and asking: ‘What is this all about? Am I playing music for my ego?’

“I wanted to do something completely different from being a rock’n’roll guitarist in a rock’n’roll band. So I went to Peru. The remote regions of Peru – the Andes, up in the mountains, with the indigenous tribes there. I ended up buying a couple of burros and just started walking. It was amazing to be taken back to something so basic and simple. It just nourished my soul.”

According to Martin, there was another reason Ted left. “We were working so intently, and because Ted was the youngest he kind of broke first, if you like.”

Ted leaving “was a blow,” he says, “but I think he had also been influenced in that department by a lady we had met in New Orleans. She walked into the dressing room – a beautiful girl – walked up to me and said: ‘Hi Martin. My name is Anastasia. I write poetry, and when I saw the flying saucer on the back of your *Argus* album, I just knew we were on the same wavelength.’ I took one look at her and



said: 'Yeah. Okay, darling. I just got to go for a sprinkle. I'll see you in a minute.' Like, get me out of here quick!

"I have a wee, and when I come back in I see her chatting to Ted, and he's just got that look in his eyes of: 'I'm just a little boy lost and I just need a mummy to take care of me.' Women would just love him. I'm thinking: 'Oh God, be careful what you're getting into there.'

"She hooked up with Ted and they became quite an item. And she had quite an influence over him at that point. Next thing, they decided they wanted to go off to South America, to some temple of divine light, some stuff like that."

Ted's replacement, Laurie Wisefield, most recently of another Copeland-managed British band, Home, could not have been more different.

"We all seemed to get on pretty well," Wisefield says now. "Martin was probably the most difficult, but he always was," he laughs. "We got on fine. I think he was just always like that. Still is to some degree."

In fact, Martin had wanted to try out Mick Ralphs, who had just left Mott The Hoople. It was Andy who invited Laurie to the basement in St John's Wood.

"Martin was a little bit worried possibly about my proficiency, in a way. Not that I wasn't good enough, more that I was too good. I think he wanted more of a kind of simple player. More of a blues-based player. I was trying to get away from that at the time. I think Andy was too.

Or at least Andy was at first.

"I was flashy on guitar at that age," Laurie remembers. "I was trying to be the fastest, the flashiest."

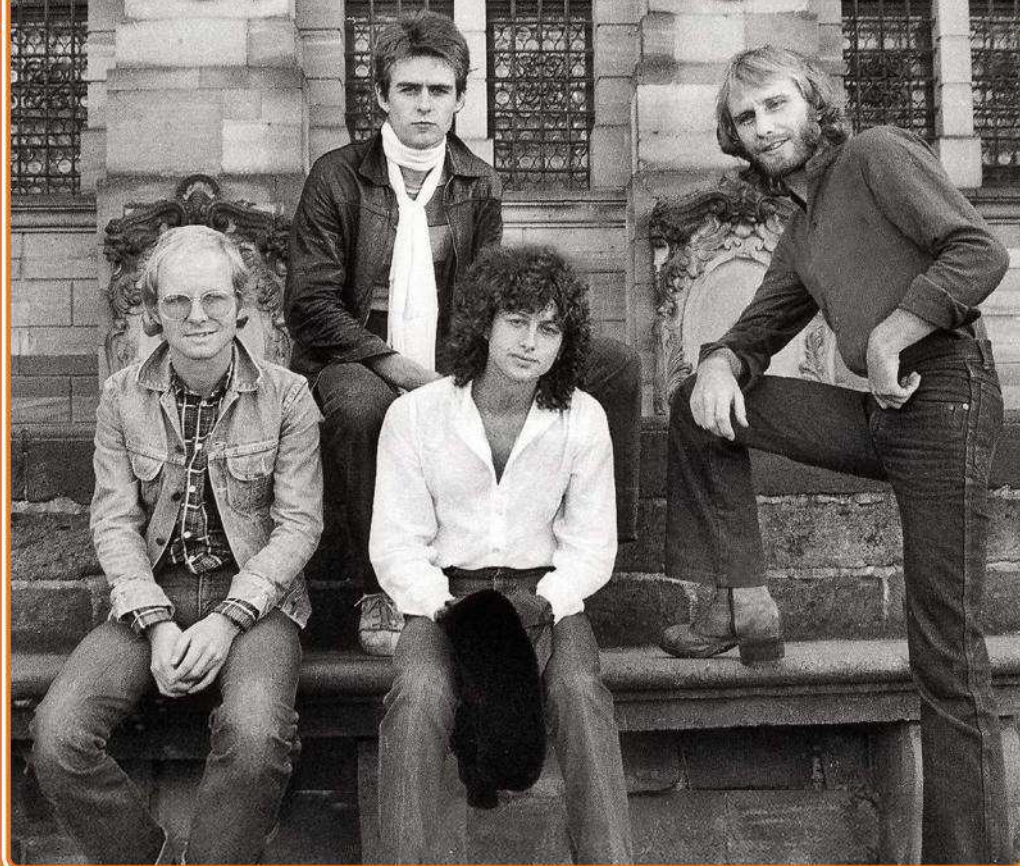
It was a shape-throwing attitude that actually dovetailed far more neatly with the rock-star persona of Martin Turner than it did with the increasingly spotlight-shy Andy Powell.

"It's true," says Powell. "I switched off when Laurie came along. I ceased to have the same role with Martin. Maybe because I was difficult – my early nickname in the band was Snap, because I was always making these snap judgements, which I knew were right. But I think the moment Martin got the opportunity, like, 'Fuck, there's another guitar player here I can work with,' I think that was the nature of the dynamic that perhaps people don't see."

Subsequent Wishbone Ash albums relied far more heavily on the joint input of Martin and Laurie than they did on Andy. None, though, were any more successful, or able to prevent the band's reputation from slipping into ignominy as the era of punk dawned.

"I mean, yeah, I had my nose sort of put out of place, so I just turned my attention to other things," says Powell. "I think Laurie was kind of oblivious to that, to be honest, because he hadn't gone through the first four albums and all of that strife and tribulation. He was just doing whatever he could to push the gig forward.

"Don't forget, he was also a guy like



"FROM DAY ONE WE WERE DASHING ACROSS THE ATLANTIC. A LOT OF PEOPLE THOUGHT WE WERE AN AMERICAN BAND."

MARTIN TURNER

Living in the past? Ash in '77: Powell, Martin Turner, Wisefield, Upton.

Martin – they liked to mine that rock-star thing. I knew I could turn that stuff on, on stage behind a guitar, but it didn't really interest me that much. I was more interested in... going back to the whole thing. I think we created something that was artistic with *Argus*. We threw that card away a bit when we became distracted.

The last few years of the 1970s found Wishbone Ash living semi-communally in Connecticut, where they became tax exiles. "We were getting big record advances by then," says Andy, "so we could afford to rent houses. Then we had one main band house, which was this fabulous place on about 14 acres with a swimming pool. It was very whimsical. When it came time to write an album, we'd all just hang out, get the acoustic guitars out. There was a lot of smoking going on."

Still able to earn big money touring those parts of the world that hadn't gone all Johnny Rotten, they did well, but the fun was no longer fun any more. Martin developed a cocaine habit, which he kicked only after a brush with hepatitis, "which I only just avoided". But none of their final three albums recorded in the 70s – *New England*, a partial return to form buried in the undignified critical rush to embrace punk; *Front Page News*, an ill-judged move into 'soft rock', breezy just as punk was blowing a gale; and the boringly titled and, frankly, boring *Just Testing*.

After that, the band informed Martin Turner that they intended to bring in a new frontman, a bizarre idea that Turner rightly bridled at and left the band over. But by then it was a far too familiar tale of egos popping, middle age encroaching, money problems mounting and the sudden, desperate urge to do anything to keep the show on the road – even if it included spoiling it for everyone involved.

No matter that by 1980 a new British band named Iron Maiden were recording their debut album – produced, not coincidentally, by former Wishbone engineer Martin Birch – so obviously influenced by those original twin guitars and machine-gun rhythms. Or that Thin Lizzy had proved you didn't need to soil your pants doing country-tinged adult-oriented whatnots in order to survive.

The phoenix, it seemed, had finally crashed to earth.

All these years and lots of shenanigans (many of them legal, but that's another story) later, however, the influence of Wishbone Ash lives on, in the shape of the current incarnation with Powell, and Turner's version, now billed as 'Martin Turner Ex-Wishbone Ash'. Mainly, though, in the form of the recently released box set, where Ash's precious catalogue is now gathered in not so quiet splendour. **1**

The 30-CD box set The Vintage Years 1970-1991 is out now via Madfish.



Fighting Spirit

The true punk icons have returned with a commanding new album. But there's a lot more to **The Damned** than you might think. Such as train spotting and gardening.

Words: **Ian Fortnam** Photos: **Will Ireland**

It's a widely held belief that The Damned are an open book. Few bands maintain an image, both as a group and as individuals, that is quite so clearly defined.

As an entity they're enduring agents of anarchy and chaos who, since delivering the nascent genre's initial vinyl statement with the seven-inch *New Rose* in October '76, have been widely accepted as punk's ultimate incarnation.

The band's creative core is the chalk-and-cheese combination of founder members Dave Vanian and Captain Sensible, two of rock's most instantly recognisable characters. Vampiric vocalist and Dark Lord Vanian's engaging coalescence of graveyard glamorous Victorian mourning dress and rich baritone has seen him embraced as a reluctant icon for goths and steampunks alike. Meanwhile, self-confessed 'court jester' and guitarist Sensible's irrepressible outpouring of beret-topped eccentricity and *Beano* demeanour

has earned him the rare honour of being accorded a full-throated chorus of "Sensible's a wanker" from each and every audience he faces.

It's easy for casual observers to regard The Damned as surviving icons of a lost era; a reliable turn, rolling out the old act for punk nostalgists, all pissed-up and misty-eyed at Rebellion. But appearances can be deceptive, and The Damned are a far-from-spent force.

"We were focused on the work, and not where we were going with it," Vanian says of The Damned's recent past. "For a while we were spiralling down. Not into a nostalgia act, but we weren't as forward-thinking as I'd have liked. Now we're back to what I'd call a proper band again. It's a great privilege to play Brian's [original guitarist Brian James] songs from the first album, but after forty-one years I don't want to just rest on my laurels. I wanted to make one last really good Damned album."

Utilising a Pledge campaign, the band were able to bring in Bowie/Bolan producer Tony Visconti and record their recently released *Evil Spirits* at his studio in Brooklyn.

"Modern engineers maximise everything," says Sensible, resplendent in red-and-black striped Dennis The Menace jumper. "They correct everything until there's no rock'n'roll left. We wanted to do it in a vintage, all-valve studio with no computers anywhere near the place."

But shortly before recording was due to commence, bassist of 13 years Stu West chose to leave. Because he left abruptly, they "had to find somebody pretty sharpish," says Sensible. "The obvious candidate was the best bass player we've ever had. I'm about fourth in that list. Maybe fifth."

"He said: 'You probably think we're a bunch of old c**ts, but would you be interested?'" says ex-Eddie And The Hot Rods/UFO bassist Paul Gray, recalling Sensible asking him to record with The



“If you imagine Dad’s Army making an album, that’s the reason we don’t make more.”

Captain Sensible

Damned for the first time since 1982’s *Strawberries* album. “It didn’t take long to say yes – probably a nanosecond.”

Among long-time Damned fans, Gray rejoining is widely regarded as a best-case scenario, as it marks an almost complete return to the Damned line-up that recorded 1980’s *The Black Album*, a record since reappraised and put alongside *Machine Gun Etiquette* as their best work. It’s no coincidence, then, that *Evil Spirits*’ 10 tracks echo the melodic, psychedelic *Black Album* Damned. Packed with earworms and hooks, the album could yet reveal itself as exactly the late-career magnum opus Vanian craved.

So the ultimate Damned frontline that we all know and love are back in harness: suave ghoul Vanian, hard-living buffoon Sensible and everything-louder-than-everything-else Gray. But is all quite as it seems? Do we really know them as well as we think we do?

Paul Gray has been in the wars. Shortly before appearing with Captain Sensible at a Rebellion festival show a couple of years back, he was involved in a ‘freak gardening accident’: “I secateured the top of my finger off, saw the top of it fall into the compost. I had to relearn all our songs on two fingers in ten days.”

And that’s not the half of it: “I’ve got really bad tinnitus and hyperacusis [hearing disorders]. Less from playing live, more from using headphones while recording with a Portastudio. I’d take the cans off at five in the morning and my ears would whistle for a while. Then one day it didn’t go. I’ve still got it twenty-four hours a day, but I’ve learned to adapt to it.”

Gray (who works as a Regional Officer for the Musicians’ Union in Cardiff, remotely while he’s on the road – he took annual leave to record the

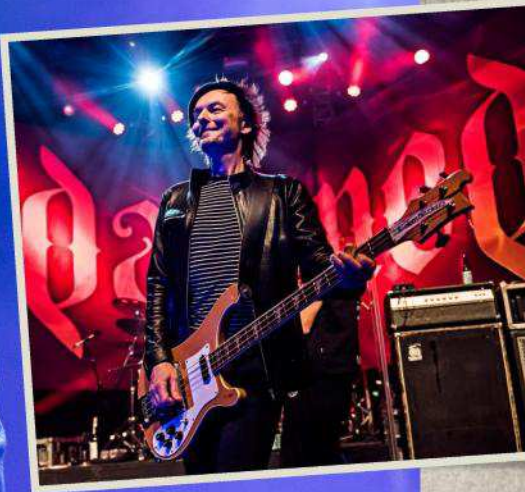


The original Damned:
(l to r) Scabies, James,
Sensible, Vanian.

album) uses hearing protection live, but can’t use in-ear monitors. “I’m struggling a bit at some of the bigger gigs,” he says. His signature basslines and melodic style suit the 2018 Damned perfectly: “I just do what I normally do,” he says, laughing. “Play way too much and hope I get away with it.”

“We’re Dad’s Army on the road” admits a temporarily beret-less Captain Sensible. “Pinch [drums] makes a good Captain Mainwaring, barking orders and bristling with organisational skills; Mr Vanian’s the easy-going Sergeant ➤

THE DAMNED



The Dad's Army Damned:
(clockwise from left) Captain
Sensible, Monty Oxymoron,
Dave Vanian, Paul Gray, Pinch.



Wilson-type" – 'Fall in why don't you, you chaps'; Monty [Oxymoron, keyboards] is Godfrey, as he frequently has to leave the stage mid-gig to be excused. I suppose I'm Corporal Jones, freaking out all the time. People ask why it takes us so long between albums. We're pretty dysfunctional, and if you imagine Dad's Army making an album, that's the reason we don't make more."

You personally are very much defined by the public image you adopted back in 1976. Do you ever regret it?

"What, the Captain thing? It opened a few doors for me. I lived the lifestyle twenty-four hours a day for years. It's seriously not good for your health. I got thrown out of [London former music pub] The Nashville Rooms once. I was in the gutter, covered in vomit. Apparently all my colleagues stepped over me, said: 'Let him rot.' I woke up on a sofa with a blanket over me. Opened my eyes, saw gold discs on the wall and all these beautiful rare guitars, thought I'd died and gone to heaven. Then Dave Edmunds walks in.

He said: 'I took pity on you because I've been there myself.' I'll always love him for that."

Do you ever get sick of the beret?

"I've gone on without it, but I just got catcalls: 'Where's your fucking beret, you c**t?' So I'm absolutely fucking lumbered with it. I only wore it in the first place because people were gobbing in my hair. It was taking me about half an hour every night to get the grollies out."

Who are you when you're not Captain Sensible?

"What, in real life? I don't know what to do with myself at home. I do really boring stuff like train spotting. I like seeing trains in other countries,

so this is a great job for that, because you can get up and go and hang around in a station. I spent years propping up the bar all night or going to dodgy clubs. The rest of the band would be having breakfast

in the hotel and I'd turn up in a dishevelled state. Nowadays I get up early, get a day pass for the local transport and ride the Metro and the buses. I get off on managing to work out how to travel like the locals do, working out the routes. It's great. And nobody knows who the fuck I am without the hat."

"Captain's always been a train spotter," Vanian says with a smile. "When I first went to his house in seventy-six he still lived with his mum and dad, and his bedroom was just like Selhurst railway station waiting room. It was painted the same colours, and he'd gone in before they pulled the station down, had taken the signs, and they were all on the walls. His love is diesel; I love the steam trains and that era. When we're on the road we sometimes go off and do steam excursions, and if I see an RAF museum I'll zip in if I've got an hour or so."

And when you're not on the road with the band? Who is Dave Vanian then?

"I like to think that I'm a dark, mysterious character that haunts the back streets of East London, but it's not true. I have lots of interests that keep me busy: art, classic vehicles, reading, poetry, old films,

vintage clothes, 1930s music, gardening."

Yes indeed, the potentially deadly pastime of gardening rears its head once more.

"I was out gardening yesterday, clearing out all the beds. In the eighties, I thought: 'Right, by the time I'm in my late thirties I'm going to have a house in the country, proper pop star stuff, and I'll build the most gothic garden anyone's ever

seen, with follies, pathways and mazes.' It never happened. But I've got a small garden. I've always loved gardening. People used to laugh. I remember years ago, jumping off the tour bus because I saw an amazing garden centre. They were all laughing, saying: 'If only your fans knew.' I ran back on to the bus and I'd bought a stainless-steel spade I was really excited about. People go for psychotherapy and God knows what else. They should just go and do some gardening. A day in the garden and you feel great. Well, some people do. I remember Rat Scabies saying: 'I'd like to concrete mine over.' But there you go."

Ah yes, Rat Scabies, drummer extraordinaire, the only member missing now from the classic *Black Album* line-up. Might we yet see the Vanian/Sensible/Gray/Scabies Damned back together for a final hurrah? Or possibly one more time around the track with original guitarist and *New Rose* writer Brian James?

"It's something I've never wanted to rule out," says Vanian. "This is my personal view. I'd love to do something with the original line-up because it'd be great for all the people who have supported us, and would really love to see it, but it would probably only happen the once. There's a little bit of a feud between Captain and Rat. If they can sort that out then maybe it's a possibility in the future."

So the last word is left to Sensible.

"It turned into a slanging match between me and Rat. But I saw him recently in Hyde Park and I said to him: 'Nobody's interested in a couple of old duffers like us arguing. Why can't we forget about it?' As the years pass, I can barely remember what we were rowing about."

Evil Spirits is out now via Spinefarm. The Damned play UK dates in June and August.

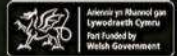
"I don't want to just rest on my laurels. I wanted to make one last really good Damned album."

Dave Vanian

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Under the Influence

The Beatles to Bizkit, Parton to Presley, Sabbath to gospel: **Black Stone Cherry** share the secret ingredients that spice up their southern-fried sounds.

Words: **Polly Glass** Photos: **James Sharrock**

You know Black Stone Cherry by now: four earnest guys from small-town Kentucky, typically found delighting arenas full of fans with their muscular, radio-friendly hard rock, plus southern chops from the Book Of Skynyrd. One could easily leave it at that. Except the full story goes a little deeper.

Last year, they released an EP of first-class blues covers. Nine years ago they were playing fiery renditions of *Folsom Prison Blues* and *Hoochie Coochie Man* at Rockpalast. Prior to that they all grew up with blues, rock, bluegrass, country, metal and soul, much of it discovered through old posters taped up (literally to keep the warmth in) on the cracked walls of their "practice house" in the woods outside Edmonton.

It was here that the founding three (drummer John Fred Young and his kindergarten pal Chris Robertson, plus bassist Jon Lawhon) held a party as teenagers, which a guitarist friend-of-a-friend called Ben Wells came to. It turned into a big bluesy jam, and the next day the four of them started Black Stone Cherry.

Their practice house was originally used by Young's dad's band, the Kentucky Headhunters, and in its walls are years of rootsy music history.

"Oh yeah, that's the backbone of this band," singer/guitarist Robertson explains, replacing his trilby in its smart case after our photo shoot at the Blues Kitchen in Shoreditch, London. Swish headgear aside, the frontman cuts a stocky, serious, down-to-earth figure. Bob Marley lyrics are tattooed on his hands – remnants of darker

days fighting depression, and finding light through the reggae icon.

Suddenly a six-foot-something tower of curly hair with a spectacularly Dixie-baked accent strides over to say hi. One part assured bro, several parts friendly chatterbox, John Fred Young has been having a look the venue's impressive bourbon shelves, but this Thursday morning he drinks mostly coffee. "Mayyn, have you seen what they got here?" he drawls. "This place is awesome!"

Eventually sitting at a table, Young, Robertson and Lawhon (Wells joins us later) are, unsurprisingly, brimming with enthusiasm for Black Stone Cherry's new, sixth album, *Family Tree*.

"On [2016's] *Kentucky* there was still a conscious effort to keep it relatively heavy," Robertson says.

"With the new record we said, 'To hell with that – let's just write great rock'n'roll songs.' We put down all the barriers we'd put up for ourselves."

"It's probably the truest representation of our band, sonically, from all of our influences over the years," Young agrees, "and just being who we are, without the concern of formulating anything to get on American rock radio."

Songs weren't

over-rehearsed, and tracks were recorded with minimal takes, which helped keep the results loose and rootsy. Without sacrificing the hard-rock brawn that their previous five albums were built on, *Family Tree* is audibly closer to their bluesy, old-school roots.

"Working on this new material was like shedding skin," says Lawhon, a Florida-born father of two who moved to Kentucky in his teens. "It's

the first time that everybody, for every second we were in the studio, had a smile on their face. It just felt right. There was nothing forced about it."

"This is the music we were supposed to have been playing our whole career," Robertson says seriously. "That's not a knock to the albums we've put out, because we're extremely proud of that stuff. But this record has a feeling of 'this is what it was supposed to be all along'."

So, let's take a look inside the Black Stone Cherry vault...

"SUPERCHARGED" ELECTRIC BLUES

Initially, it was the rocky, ferocious bluesiness of Jimi Hendrix that appealed to Robertson while he was growing up.

"It was *Red House* and *Hear My Train A Comin'*," he remembers. "And then I got into some Stevie Ray Vaughan, and then I started going back to the Muddy Waters stuff. I have a heartfelt appreciation for Delta blues, but my favourite blues is the electric Chicago stuff – y'know, where it's supercharged. But at the same time the Chess [label] Howlin' Wolf collection is some of the greatest music ever created, and it was one microphone in a room with a bunch of guys. But yeah, my introduction to blues lay a lot on Hendrix. And he was a rock'n'roll guy, but you can't deny *Red House*."

Their three heads bob in agreement, just as Freddie King's *Going Down* starts playing over the speakers.

"John Fred's dad got me into Freddie King," Robertson says. "I was about fifteen or sixteen. Our voices aren't the same, but they have similarities: they're big loud voices. And even the guitar playing, the snappiness that Freddie had, playing those Gibson 345s and with just *everything* on ten. It'd tear your fucking head off, man. Freddie King and Howlin' Wolf are probably my two favourite blues artists ever."

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
**"FREDDIE KING,
PLAYING THOSE
GIBSON 345s AND
WITH EVERYTHING
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HEAD OFF, MAN."**

Chris Robertson

BSC at the Blues Kitchen:
(l-r) Jon Lawhon, John Fred Young,
Chris Robertson, Ben Wells.

**“WITH THE NEW RECORD, WE SAID, ‘LET’S
 JUST WRITE GREAT ROCK’N’ROLL SONGS.’
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Chris Robertson

Chris Robertson rocks the Download Main Stage in 2008.



Fresh-faced, and longer of hair (apart from John Fred) in 2008.

OLDER BLUES AND "MOTOWN ROCK'N'ROLL"

For bassist Lawhon, it's the earlier blues legends that drew him in. "I'm more of a Robert Johnson fan," he says. "There's a dark, eerie side that I really dig: *Me And The Devil Blues*, *Hellhound On My Trail*, that's some scary shit."

Robertson: "When you get into that stuff, towards Robert Johnson, I like Son House."

"*Death Letter Blues* is probably one of the scariest songs that was ever written," Young says enthusiastically.

"Son House just had this..." Robertson searches for the words. "He would play guitar in one time signature and sing in another. Jesus, it's just incredible stuff."

Was there much of that sort of music being played, or jammed, in Edmonton?

"No," Robertson says. "And my dad was a classic rock and country guy, a big Waylon Jennings fan. It was John Fred's dad who instilled the blues into us."

So how did Young Senior first discover the blues, in a country-heavy Bible Belt town?

"My dad and uncle Fred [Young, also in the Kentucky Headhunters], when they were ten and eleven, knew some older guys that lived on the farm for my grandparents," Young explains. "They used to have my dad and my uncle go and buy 'em liquor cos they were too old to get out. They were probably eighty, eighty-five years old, and they had all kinds of blues records. And when I was four or five I was watching my dad and uncle play music, hearing them talk about blues artists – Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Lightnin' Hopkins, all the greats."

Young's first love, however, was the Motown his parents played at home. *Ain't Nobody* and *James Brown* on the new record reflect this, and also R&B, Aretha Franklin...

"Sam Cooke, Percy Sledge, Marvin

Gaye, Al Green..." Young continues. "We have three wonderful ladies back home, and they are some of the best soul singers you'll ever find.

They kill it. *James Brown*, *Ain't Nobody*, those songs are pretty much 'rock'n'roll Motown' – from our neck of the woods."

OBSURE (AND LESS OBSCURE) CLASSIC ROCK, FROM THAT HOUSE IN THE WOODS...

BSC guitarist Ben Wells joins us at this point, smiling shyly. Of the four, the difference between Wells's offstage and onstage persona is the biggest: small with a gelled blond quiff, his animated stage self and rock star high kicks seem to belong to someone else.

Not that this prevented him being welcomed into the BSC family, who, growing up in a 'dry' county, had "nothing to do but play rock'n'roll".

★★

"NEW ALBUM *FAMILY TREE* IS PROBABLY THE TRUEST REPRESENTATION OF OUR BAND, SONICALLY, FROM ALL OF OUR INFLUENCES."

John Fred Young

Instead of going to high-school parties, they'd head over to the practice house after school, jam for hours, look at the posters of old blues and rock stars and drink liquor swiped from their parents.

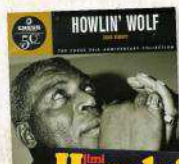
"That house is a museum out in the woods,"

Young says earnestly. "It carved us out, what we are now. *Everybody* loves Led Zeppelin, the Stones, The Beatles – I love the Beatles, mayn. But there was some stuff that we were so fortunate to get introduced to. Everybody thinks Lynyrd Skynyrd is the main influence for us, and they are a big influence, but there were bands like Cactus that were a huge influence...

"Trapeze," Robertson adds.

"Yes! Trapeze, Mountain..."

Young enthuses.



"The big ones for us are Skynyrd, Zeppelin, Aerosmith and Free, as far as your classic rock bands are concerned. And for me I hear the Allman Brothers influence coming through on this new record."

HEAVY METAL AND BOOT-SCOOTIN' COUNTRY HALLS

As food menus are passed around, talk flits between burgers and the beefier end of BSC's spectrum of musical influences. They cite Black Sabbath as their biggest classic heavy influence, but from there it's

predominantly more recent artists that they've looked to, from Pantera and Metallica to little-known Kentucky acts.

"There were great local bands," Robertson says. "There's a band called Superfuzz that were just fucking incredible. There was a big metal scene

when we were growing up. It was really eclectic. We had everything from stoner rock to country bands to metal bands."

Recollections from their own early gigs, however, are a little less glowing.

"The dead space between songs..."

Robertson deadpans.

"That famous song 'Tuning'," Lawhon says laughing. "We'd play that a lot."

"I'll tell you how sparse the scene was," Young says. "There was a place in Cave City Kentucky called Factory,

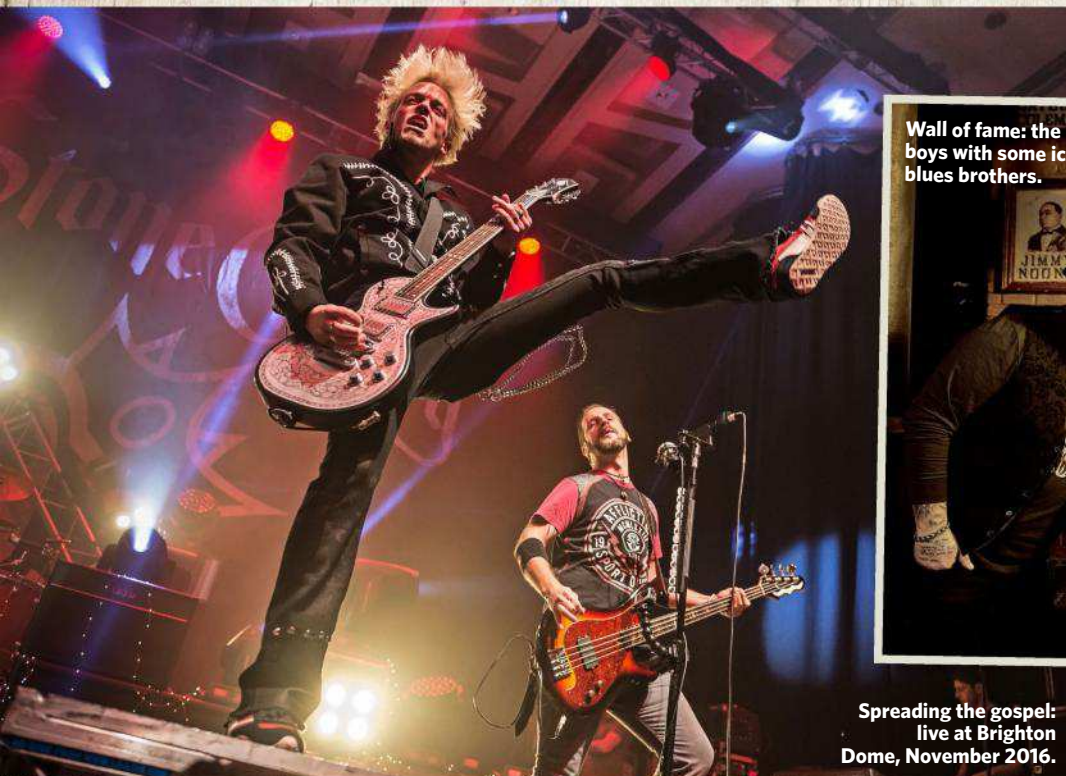
and it was a boot-scootin' line-dance country hall. We literally had to beg them to do a rock night on Friday so we could go in and have our ten buddies come in and pay the door fee so we could play music. It was basically rehearsal."

It worked, however, and they began to draw bigger audiences.

"We'd play anywhere: the skating rink, the Catholic church meeting place," Wells remembers. "When you were in high school, if you could convince seventy-five kids on a Friday night to not go to a basketball or football or baseball game, you were doing something."

ELVIS PRESLEY AND DOLLY PARTON

Reminiscing on a trip to watch former Stray Cats frontman Brian Setzer in Iowa ("One of



Wall of fame: the BSC boys with some iconic blues brothers.



Spreading the gospel: live at Brighton Dome, November 2016.

our buddies, Kevin McKendree, plays keyboards with him," says Young) leads us to Wells's other rock'n'roll love, Elvis Presley.

"Yes, ma'am," he nods, smiling. "He's been part of my life as long as I can make a memory. I love his music, his movies, the whole package."

You wouldn't have seen him live, obviously, but The King has many impersonators. Have you guys seen any?

"I grew up doing that, actually," Wells says. "I had a jumpsuit made and I wore a black wig and I had the scarves..."

"I was probably seven or eight years old," he adds, "so I wouldn't necessarily call myself a singer! I still incorporate the karate moves on stage."

"He would go round all the nursing homes, schools," Young says, grinning. "He'd make women faint. He was a li'l heartbreaker..."

"The '68 Comeback Special is probably my favourite Elvis era," Young says. "People would not have discovered blues music if it wasn't for Elvis Presley. He was highly influenced by blues, gospel and country." He grins and shakes his head. "Honestly, this band is so eclectic. We saw Dolly Parton in Oklahoma..."

"And we went as fans, not because it's funny to go see Dolly Parton," Wells says earnestly. "I've always called her the female Elvis. She's the total package, she knows how to entertain the crowd, everybody loves her."

"She was shaking that sequin dress she had afterwards," Young remembers, "and we were picking up little sequins off stage. I got enough to make a purse or something..."

FINDING PEACE WITH GOSPEL AND PINK FLOYD

Living right in Bible Belt country, Black Stone Cherry grew up in the heartland of southern gospel. For Wells, raised in a Baptist household, and who now attends a non-denominational church, this music has held real meaning.

"I love the old hymns," he says. "I know sometimes people might think they're slow and sappy, but when you

hear those, especially southern gospel, when there are groups singing with those voices harmonising, I love that. I think it's so peaceful, y'know? That's what drew me to the Elvis gospel stuff."

"I haven't been [to church] in a while but Ben goes regularly," Robertson says. "You were talking about the peaceful feeling you get from the hymns. That's what Pink Floyd does for me. Just sit back and listen to *Dark Side Of The Moon* or something, man."

Young adds: "See, I never was a Pink Floyd fan, until about six years ago when Chris was like: 'Dude, you need to listen to Pink Floyd...' We evolve with time, but I think the stuff that we all grew up with we still love."

"I've got two girls myself now," Lawhon joins in, "and your kids will pick up things that you listen to. We've got one of those Amazon Alexa things, and they steal it all the time. I'll be walking through the house and I'll hear The Beatles or Ray Charles rocking out from my kids' playroom. I think it's awesome that it's that and not whatever pop crap is going on right now!"

"I like that modern pop crap," Young pipes up.

Lawhon: "I like a lot of modern pop stuff, but not the kids' pop."

Young: "I could sing you *every* Disney song that's out there..."

SNAKES, GATORS AND, ER, LIMP BIZKIT

Ever loyal to their roots, and even with family duties to juggle (Young, Robertson and Lawhon are all fathers, Wells has beagles), Black Stone Cherry still jam at the old practice house – but only in cold weather.

"If you go when it's hot, the fiddler spiders are moving," Young explains. "The ones we have had, like, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle slime kicked all over 'em and they're about as big as an orange."

"We have poisonous snakes too, and I'm scared shitless of all of 'em," Robertson adds, shuddering.

"At least the gators are further south, because they don't do well with cold," Lawhon explains, "and it's pretty damn cold in Kentucky in winter."

"Just the ones that somebody had as a pet indoors," Young drawls, incredulously, "and it gets a little big so they put it outside..."

Robertson: [adopts 'dumbass' voice] "So I bought this alligator for a pet, I didn't realise it was a fucking dinosaur..."

"To get all Discovery Channel on you," Young jumps in, "there was a lot of people turning pythons and boa constrictors loose in Florida – they're not native there, obviously, they're from South America. And they're breeding and they're these big, jacked-up, went-to-the-gym snakes."

"Leave it to the Floridians," Florida native Lawhon sighs. "The local music scene there was crap. It was a bunch of wannabe rap rock. You're talking late nineties. It was not good."

"I don't care who you are, you can't not like Limp Bizkit, okay?" Young says adamantly. "When

that band came out, I got *Family Values*. It was filthy. We couldn't sit here and say that Korn and Limp Bizkit didn't have an influence on us when we were growing up, cos they were massive..."

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★ "THE BIG ONES FOR US ARE SKYNYRD, ZEPPELIN, AEROSMITH AND FREE..."

Chris Robertson

As plates of American BBQ classics and New Orleans soul food arrive, chatter becomes musings on Limp Bizkit album *Chocolate Starfish And The Hot Dog Flavored Water*, and the gems of their tour bus playlist, which veer from Muddy Waters and the Traveling Wilburys to Justin Timberlake and Travis Tritt. And it's all part of the BSC world, created by four friends who started a band, became huge and remain undivided after 17 years.

"There was never an 'if' we get to do this," Lawhon says. "If was never the term. It was always 'when'. There were no second options." 📌

Family Tree is out now via Mascot. BSC play Download on June 9. Special thanks to The Blues Kitchen, Shoreditch (theblueskitchen.com).



THE WILD, THE WILLING AND THE INNOCENT

Guitar hero **Michael Schenker** hired and fired singers with abandon. So what made them all come back on board for an album and tour? The vocalists tell their stories.

Words: **Paul Elliott**

A story that began in 1978, when German guitarist Michael Schenker walked out of British rock band UFO, has now come full circle, 40 years on.

Following the recent success of the Michael Schenker Fest, a touring revue of Schenker and his band featuring four singers whom he has worked with since 1979 – Gary Barden, Graham Bonnet, Robin McAuley and Doogie White – the concept has been extended with an album of brand new material, titled *Resurrection*.

It was Schenker's work with UFO and his brother Rudolf's band Scorpions in the 70s that elevated him to guitar hero status, inspiring a generation of rock musicians, including Iron Maiden's Steve Harris and Metallica's Kirk Hammett, the latter featuring on *Resurrection*.

In the early 80s there were great albums by the Michael Schenker Group – two with Barden, one with Bonnet. Later that decade, the rebranded McAuley Schenker Group rode the hair-metal wave. Most recently, with White fronting Michael Schenker's Temple Of Rock, the guitarist's stock has risen again.

Along the way there has been drama – and plenty of it. Barden was fired not once, but twice. Bonnet exited in disgrace after drunkenly exposing himself onstage during his one and only gig with MSG. And for the guitarist himself, christened 'Mad Michael' during his wild years, there was a life-changing switch to sobriety in 2008.

Central to this story is one man's obsession. "The art of lead guitar is pure self-expression," Schenker says in clipped tones, his accent still strong even after years of living in the UK, his conversation a mix of blunt opinion, sharp humour and free-form ramblings born from years of soul searching. But in each chapter of the story, there's a singer with his own tale to tell, of good times and bad. And it all plays out with the most unlikely of happy endings: with five old rock'n'roll survivors united.





MSG in 1980: (l-r) Michael Schenker, Paul Raymond, Chris Glen, Gary Barden, Cozy Powell.

CHAPTER 1

GARY BARDEN AND THE EARLY DAYS

"I wanted an unknown singer." Michael Schenker



They were an odd couple, Michael Schenker and Gary Barden – the enigmatic guitar hero who never wanted to be famous, and the printer's apprentice who had overcome a stammer to chase his dreams of stardom as a rock singer. But it was this partnership that shaped the first two classic albums by the Michael Schenker Group. And it was purely by chance that Schenker found the man he calls "the definitive MSG singer".

In 1979, Schenker was at a crossroads. After quitting UFO, he'd been lured back to the Scorpions, the band in which he made his recording debut, aged 16, on their 1972 album *Lonesome Crow*. As he recalls: "My brother Rudolf [Scorpions guitarist] asked me to help, which I did."

Michael played lead on the Scorpions' 1979 album *Lovedrive*, but declined to rejoin the band on a permanent basis. "The Scorpions didn't want to let me go," he says. "Rudolf got very angry. But I had my own vision – to create my own band."

Michael's manager, Peter Mensch, had other ideas. Another of Mensch's acts, Aerosmith, needed a new guitarist after Joe Perry had quit. "I fought my way out of the Scorpions, and Mensch sent me straight to Aerosmith," Schenker says, laughing.

But that alliance was never going to work out. Aerosmith were in a drug-frazzled mess, singer Steven Tyler most of

all. "Steven was not in good shape," Michael says. "And I wasn't in a good place anyway."

Mensch then suggested that Schenker form a supergroup with a big-name singer: Sammy Hagar. Instead, Schenker worked briefly on new material with Aerosmith's drummer Joey Kramer and bassist Tom Hamilton. He was also in contact with Geddy Lee and Neil Peart of Rush, whom he had befriended when the Canadian band toured with UFO. "Geddy and Neil wanted to help me make my album."

Through it all, there was one absolute certainty in Schenker's mind: "I wanted an unknown singer."

And it was at the London office of his record label, Chrysalis, that he heard Gary Barden's voice for the first time, on a demo tape by a band named (after a famous British sports car) Frazer Nash. And he loved what he heard in that voice. "Lots of feel," he says.

A few days later, he watched Frazer Nash rehearse in what Barden describes as "a shithole" in Victoria. Barden was star-struck. "Michael was wearing these white, thigh-high boots," he remembers. "Rock'n'roll royalty."

At the end of the rehearsal, Schenker presented Barden with a cassette containing 30 of his songs and said: "Please listen." Barden was in.

"This was a golden opportunity," the singer says. "The other guys in my band understood. There were no hard feelings."

It was also validation for Barden after the struggles in his early life. "Since I was a kid, my speech impediment made me insular," he explains. "I lacked confidence. But taking up singing helped me in a strange way."

As a teenager he had played guitar in bands in his home town of Tunbridge Wells. He started singing, for a band called Moses, only because nobody else fancied it. "I did the first gig with my back to the audience, shitting myself," he recalls. "But when we did *Child In Time* I was note fucking perfect."

Barden performed with complete authority on the Michael Schenker Group's self-titled debut album. After demos were recorded in late 1979 with former Montrose drummer Denny Carmassi and Talas bassist Billy Sheehan, the album was recorded with session musicians Simon Phillips (drums) and Mo Foster (bass), plus Don Airey of Rainbow ➤



Schenker with "definitive MSG singer" Gary Barden.

MICHAEL SCHENKER

(and now with Deep Purple) on keyboards. The album, released in August 1980, featured tracks that would become Schenker standards: *Armed And Ready*, *Cry For The Nations*, *Lost Horizons* and the tour de force *Into The Arena*. “That album is a classic,” Barden says. “It was extraordinary for its time, and even now it sounds fresh.”

The second album, titled MSG, was even better. It had ex-Rainbow drummer Cozy Powell, ex-UFO keyboard player Paul Raymond and former Sensational Alex Harvey Band bassist Chris Glen, and among many great tracks – *Are You Ready To Rock*, *On And On*, *Looking For Love* – was the song that became the guitarist’s signature, *Attack Of The Mad Axeman*. “People thought it was about a serial killer,” Schenker laughs. “But Gary told me: ‘It’s about you, Michael!’”

The double live album *One Night At Budokan* followed in February 1982, but by the time of its release, Barden had been fired. “To this day, it still leaves a bad taste in the mouth,” he says.

Schenker claims that the decision was not his. “I never fired anybody!” he insists. “It was Peter Mensch. To get MSG to the next level, Peter wanted me to take David Coverdale. And David Coverdale wanted Cozy Powell and myself in his band, Whitesnake. But Coverdale was the opposite of what I was looking for.”

In the end, Powell joined Whitesnake. Schenker turned down an offer from Ozzy Osbourne after his guitarist Randy Rhoads had died in a plane crash in March 1982, and instead put together a new MSG, with another ex-member of Rainbow in singer Graham Bonnet, alongside bassist Chris Glen and his former SAHB colleague, drummer Ted McKenna. The quartet recorded the album *Assault Attack*. But before it was released, Bonnet was dismissed following his infamous onstage meltdown at Sheffield University (more on that later), during a warm-up gig ahead of MSG’s headline appearance at the Reading Festival.

Schenker had to act fast. “I called Gary and said: ‘Please help!’ But of course you feel stupid getting rid of somebody and then having to ask them to come back.”

Barden saved the day at Reading and appeared on the fourth MSG album, 1983’s *Built To Destroy*. It was a weak album, though, and received a merciless beating from *Sounds* writer Garry Bushell. At the time, Barden was so incensed that he went to the *Sounds* office to confront Bushell. The presence of security staff, he says, prevented the situation escalating into a fist fight. Barden now concedes that the album “sucked”. Schenker believes that Bushell’s review, for all its viciousness, was a blessing in disguise. “If anything, that review was convenient. It was time to start a new chapter.”

In April 1984, while MSG were opening for Ozzy Osbourne on a US tour, Barden was fired for a second time. Schenker says flatly: “Gary went downhill, drinking more.”

Barden accepts this. “It had been building for some time,” the singer says.

It was twenty-four years later that they made another MSG album together, *In The Midst Of Beauty*.

For Gary Barden, the early days of MSG were both the best of times and the worst of times. He says of Schenker: “Mad, no, but a genius for sure.”

Of himself, he says with characteristic humility: “I’m not a great singer by some people’s standards, but like my old school reports said, ‘He tries hard.’”



Graham Bonnet: rocked out with his cock out – and cocked up.

CHAPTER 2

FARCICAL TIMES IN '82

“I was drinking heavily. A lot of the time I was semi-conscious.” Graham Bonnet

Graham Bonnet’s brief tenure with MSG is remembered as much for the farcical nature of his exit as for the great album he left behind. As he says: “I really made a fool of myself.”

He came to MSG with a big reputation. As the singer for Rainbow, his powerful voice had lit up their 1979 album *Down To Earth* and its two great hit singles: *Since You Been Gone* and *All Night Long*. After leaving Rainbow he had another hit as a solo artist with *Night Games*. “The funny thing,” he says, “is that I never wanted to be a heavy rock singer.”

Bonnet had first tasted fame as one half of 60s pop duo The Marbles, who’d had a Top Five hit with *Only One Woman* in ’68. Then in the late 70s, he had two solo No. 1s in Australia with MOR versions of songs by Bob Dylan and the Bee Gees. Famously, Bonnet had never heard of Rainbow before he was invited to audition for the band. It was the same with MSG – even after he had been mixing with rock musicians for three years, he says, “I didn’t know who Michael Schenker was.”

His introduction to Schenker came via Cozy Powell, MSG’s drummer, who had played alongside Bonnet in Rainbow. But within a few weeks of joining MSG, Bonnet was shocked when Powell left to join Whitesnake. “He gets me in,” Bonnet laughs, “and then fucks off. Cheers, Cozy!”

As a result, Ted McKenna played drums on the album *Assault Attack*. “It was a time I don’t remember too well,” Bonnet admits. “I was drinking heavily. A lot of the time I was semi-conscious. I thought that drinking made it better. That was my downfall.”

What came out of that marathon piss-up was a fine

album, much of it heavy, but with a great pop-rock song in *Dancer* and a glorious epic in *Desert Song*. It was after the album was completed, in 1982, that the nightmare at Sheffield University unfolded.

“We’d all been drinking that afternoon,” Bonnet recalls. “By show time I was obliterated.”

The trouble started as soon as the band got into the first number. As fans pushed against the stage, Bonnet was horrified to see his sheets of lyrics, which were taped to monitors, being crumpled and torn. “I swore at the audience for fucking up my lyrics,” he says. “They shouted back: ‘You cunt!’ And then the fly on my jeans split, my dick fell out, and of course the dick became part of the act. I said: ‘Here it is,’ wibble-wobble, ‘see ya!’ And I walked off.”

Schenker says he didn’t see any of this. “I was playing, and then I looked to my right and there’s no singer. So we ended up playing the whole show without Graham. And I never saw him after.”

What Bonnet recalls, as best he can, is a roadie telling him backstage: “They’re gonna fucking kill you, Graham. Get the hell out of here.”

Bonnet retreated to the band’s hotel, and quietly slipped away the next morning on a train to

London, where his manager told him he had been fired.

After that there was no contact between Schenker and Bonnet for 26 years. Schenker says evenly: “I was never bitter about Graham. I don’t hold grudges. I moved on.”

For Bonnet, what happened that night in Sheffield was the lowest point of his career. “I have now been sober fifteen years,” he says. “Thank God I’m not that guy any more.”





Hair force: Robin McAuley with Schenker at LA's Record Plant studio in '87.

CHAPTER 3

THE BIRTH OF THE MCAULEY SCHENKER GROUP

"MSG hit the stage like a hairdresser's nightmare!"

Review of their Whitesnake support at Wembley

It was in the early 80s that Irish singer Robin McAuley was first offered an audition for MSG. He declined, for two reasons. One, he remained committed to the band Grand Prix. "I'm not one for jumping ship," he says. "I didn't think it was an honourable thing to do."

Two, he was wary of 'Mad Michael'. "We all knew the stories – nightmarish stories. Did I want to be part of that? Not particularly."

Four years later, after Grand Prix fizzled out, a second approach from Schenker was accepted. "I wanted a singer who would give me stability," Schenker says. "And that was Robin."

What McAuley had not anticipated was equal billing in this new venture. "I wasn't ready for the tag 'McAuley Schenker Group'. That was entirely Michael's idea," Schenker says simply. "I was making it an equal partnership. And his name started with an 'M', so why not?"

The first McAuley Schenker Group album, *Perfect Timing*, was released in 1987, at the height of hair metal. As McAuley recalls: "There was this whole new spectrum of bands – Winger, Warrant, Ratt, even Whitesnake was reinvented for the purpose of MTV – and we fell into that time period. We had the power ballads, the commercial songs..."

They also had the hair – in McAuley's case, the mother of all mullets. "All ten feet of it!" he laughs. "I couldn't get through doorways. It was pretty ridiculous. And Michael's hair extensions – he looked like Sitting Bull! I remember when we played Wembley with Whitesnake, one review said: 'MSG hit the stage like a hairdresser's nightmare!'"

It was with the second album, *Save Yourself*, in 1989, that they came closest to major success. The ballad *Anytime* – "the lovey-dovey song", as McAuley calls it – was a minor hit in the US.

But then, in 1991, Schenker formed the short-lived supergroup Contraband with L.A. Guns guitarist Tracii Guns, Ratt drummer Bobby Blotzer, Vixen bassist Share Pedersen and Shark Island singer Richard Black. And while Schenker reunited with McAuley for a third album, titled *M.S.G.*, its release in 1992 came after the 'big bang' of grunge. "Nobody wanted eighties music," McAuley says. "You couldn't give yourself away. So the dinosaurs went away to graze."

McAuley took time out from the music business. "I got married, and we had twin boys."

Schenker also changed course: "I said: 'I'm done. I'm doing an acoustic solo album.' I wanted to be completely out of the rock scene."



Doogie White leading the Temple Of Rock in 2015.

CHAPTER 4

DOOGIE WHITE AND THE TEMPLE OF ROCK

"I had to clean up. And after that it was a new life – boom!" Michael Schenker

Doogie White was 20 when he bought the first Michael Schenker Group album on the day it was released in 1980. He remembers that it came with a free patch. Thirty-one years later, the Scottish singer found himself in Schenker's band Temple Of Rock.

This wasn't the first time that White had teamed up with a temperamental guitar hero. In common with Graham Bonnet, he had worked with both Ritchie Blackmore and Yngwie Malmsteen. What surprised White was that Schenker wasn't the mad axeman of popular mythology. "Michael was a joy to work with," he says. But then, by 2011, Schenker was a changed man.

Following the demise of the McAuley Schenker Group, the guitarist's career had been erratic, veering between instrumental solo albums, MSG records with other, lesser-known singers, and a reunion with UFO. MSG's 2006 album *Tales Of Rock & Roll* featured guest appearances from Barden, Bonnet and McAuley – a sign of what was to come. Most significant of all was Schenker's decision to deal with his long-running problem with alcohol, a decision prompted by a disastrous 2007 tour. "I had to clean up," he says. "And after that it was a new life – boom!" ➤

In White's long career, begun in the 80s with melodic rock bands La Paz and Midnight Blue, the highlight was his spell with Rainbow, singing on their 1995 album *Stranger In Us All*—Rainbow's last hurrah before Blackmore abandoned heavy rock. What White also gained from his time in Rainbow was a keen appreciation of Graham Bonnet's vocal prowess. "When I tried to sing *All Night Long*," he says, "Ritchie just laughed. It nearly killed me."

It was a mutual friend, Chris Glen, who introduced White to Schenker at an MSG show in London. That night, to White's astonishment, he was invited on stage to sing the UFO anthem *Doctor Doctor*. Soon after, he was asked to contribute to the album that Schenker entitled *Temple Of Rock*. "It was a solo album," White notes, "but he had a lot of famous friends on it."

Among them were ex-Scorpions drummer Herman Rarebell, UFO bassist Pete Way, Rudolf Schenker and Robin McAuley. White co-wrote and sang the song *Before The Devil Knows You're Dead*. Producer Michael Voss doubled as the principal singer on the album, but when Schenker put together a touring group—also named Temple Of Rock, with Rarebell, Way and Wayne Findlay on keyboards—Voss could only commit to the Japanese dates. As a result, McAuley performed on the US leg, and White in Europe.



Taking the Temple on the road: (l-r) Francis Buchholz, Doogie White, Schenker, Herman Rarebell, Wayne Findlay.

After Pete Way left due to ill health, in came another Scorpions veteran, Francis Buchholz, on bass. And it was White alone who sang on the two albums that followed: *Bridge The Gap* (2013) and *Spirit On A Mission* (2015). "Michael and I formed a really good writing partnership," White says. Schenker calls it "a magic formula".

But in 2015, when Temple Of Rock toured Japan with the Graham Bonnet Band as support, a new

idea came to Schenker after Bonnet joined him on stage for the first time since that fateful night in 1982. As White recalls: "When Graham sang those songs, the Japanese fans went absolutely mental."

For Bonnet, it was a special moment. "Michael was beaming. It was like I was redeeming myself after all the crap I had put him through."

And Schenker realised: "It was time to do the old music again with the original singers."



Hatchets buried and Christmas-card lists updated: the reunited Schenker 'family' get Fest-ive.

CHAPTER 5

RESURRECTION & THE MICHAEL SCHENKER FEST

"I feel better than I did twenty years ago." Michael Schenker

When the idea of the Michael Schenker Fest was first mooted, Graham Bonnet had his doubts. "I thought it would be too much like a talent show," he says.

Robin McAuley knew better. Since 2012, after years working on film soundtracks and jingles, and touring with AOR band Survivor, he's starred in a classic rock revue show in Las Vegas, *Raiding The Rock Vault*. "I share a stage with four singers every night in Vegas," he says. "So I was confident about Michael Schenker Fest."

In these shows, Schenker had Barden, Bonnet and McAuley singing songs from their respective eras, backed by stalwarts Chris Glen and Ted McKenna, plus Steve Mann, ex-McAuley Schenker Group, on keyboards. "The fans loved it so much that I thought: 'How about Michael Schenker Fest in the studio?'" Schenker says.

Which led to this year's *Resurrection* album. With White also enlisted, each singer is featured individually on different tracks. But there are two, *Warrior* and *The Last Supper*, on which all four trade

lead vocals. "It is amazing to hear them all singing together," Schenker says.

And as this motley crew head out on the road, beginning in the US, it's with a sense of camaraderie forged over many years. As Doogie White says: "There's two Englishmen, an Irishman, a Scotsman and a German..."

This sounds like the first line of a bad joke. "Well," he says, laughing, "let's see how it goes..."

Resurrection is out now via Nuclear Blast.



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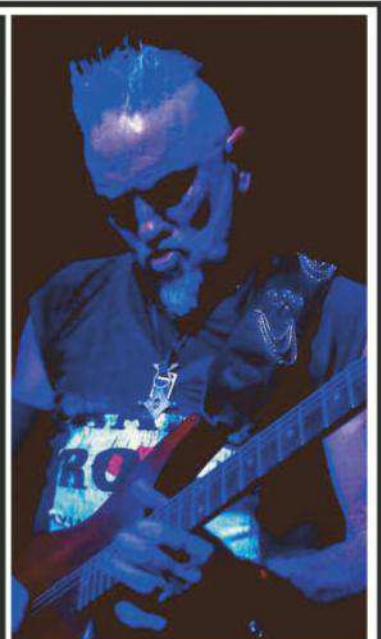
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DEF JAMS

What a great Def Leppard issue. Unfortunately you forgot to credit legendary graphic designer Andie Airfix for the artwork you used to create your cover! Andie designed the covers of *Pyromania*, *Hysteria*, *Adrenalize* and *Euphoria*. His artwork is a huge part of Def Leppard's history. Some say *Pyromania* and *Hysteria* are two of the greatest album covers of all time.

You can read more about Andie and Def Leppard on his blog andieairfix.wordpress.com and see more of his work at www.andieairfix.com. Please give Andie the credit he deserves.

Ricky C-M, via email

Absolutely. Thanks Ricky, it was definitely an oversight on our part. Andie's artwork is intrinsic to the whole Def Leppard story that we were celebrating with the band last month, and we couldn't have done it without his inspiration. Andie has also done some amazing work with Led Zeppelin, Gary Moore, the Stones and more.

The latest issue is great... Def Leppard were the first band I ever saw live, at Wembley in 1988. Great band! Some years ago, *Classic Rock* featured another of my favourite bands, Benedictum, and rated them as ones to watch. It would be great to

see them in *Classic Rock* again and their amazing vocalist The V in her solo capacity. I understand new music is being planned so would definitely say they're still ones to watch. Fingers crossed one day horns will be raised at Download for them.

Peter Freeman, via email

I just received this month's copy and of course saw your article on Def Leppard's 40th anniversary. I'm not a fan but still good to see. I just hope you do the same for the mighty Whitesnake because it is also their 40th anniversary this year. So please make me happy and do the same for Sir Cov and co.

Mark Jude, via email

ROCK'N'ROLL'S NOT DEAD #1

They say that rock'n'roll never dies. Well this seems to be the case with Rick Parfitt. According to *Classic Rock* issue 248, page 84, Rick was recording his album *Lonesome Road* after recovering from his heart attack in July 2017, that's more than seven months after he died! Well done Rick for loyalty to the cause!

Ian Smith, Bilston

Yikes. I think we'll blame the deadline gremlins for that one. We meant 2016. Sorry about that!

ROCK'N'ROLL'S NOT DEAD #2

Just received my latest edition, and went straight to the article about The Temperance Movement. These guys are absolutely the best thing out there right now. I've been a fan since day one and recently saw them at the Sheffield 02 Academy. What a gig! Where does Phil Campbell get all his energy from? I couldn't stop smiling all the way through. We bumped into Matt afterwards, and he was a true gent. I've been banging on to my mates about this band for years. They deserve far more recognition than they get now, but I'm sure that will come.

PS. The 'Album Of The Week' is an excellent idea, especially as I have an original copy of last month's album, *A Nod Is As Good As A Wink*.

Richard Jackson, Sheffield

Good to see the return of the letters page in the guise of the Classic Rock Social Club... I'm writing to thank you for the splendid review of Stone Broken's gig in Brighton in your May issue. I was writing to you suggesting you check these guys out and review their debut album two years ago, to no avail – but it is very gratifying to see such positive coverage at last. The four-page feature was beautifully written by Johnny Sharp – a most engaging piece of journalism – and adorned with super photos courtesy of Marie Korner.

Mike Hayes, via email

THE 90s ALBUMS DEBATE RAGES ON...

Couldn't have been happier that *Bellybutton* by Jellyfish was included in your Greatest Albums Of The 90s. For me, though, there were two gaps in your list... the first one probably a little obvious: *Angel Dust* by Faith No More. The second T-Ride which to me is simply phenomenal. Easily one of the best rock records of the 90s or any other decade and a true undiscovered gem.

Gavin, via email

CLASSIC ROCK ALBUM OF THE WEEK CLUB

Every week we choose a classic album – some obscure, some well known – and share knowledge and opinion. Listen and debate with us at: teamrock.com/aotw. Have your say on the history of rock, one album at a time... And you might just see yourself in print.

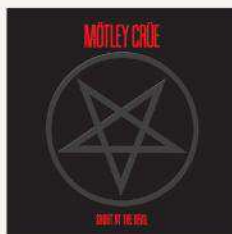
Shout At The Devil

MÖTLEY CRÜE (1983)

WHAT YOU SAID

Dave Howarth: I was like 19-20 at the time. Seemed really dangerous. It is what it is. Dead basic but enjoyable. I think you had to be there. They were innocent times. It's their best by a long shot. Truth be known we'd all like to do what they've done.

Iain Macaulay: 'When did Mötley Crüe become classic rock?' said Bowling For Soup in their song 1985. A good question. Initially I would have said this is definitely of its time, but with a certain naive charm, and quite a bit of style over substance. But, listening to it again tonight, it still seems to stand up. It's certainly dated much better than *Girls*, which is rubbish, by being dirtier and rawer.



John Edgar: I'm a fan of a lot of 80s rock, but to me this album was a waste of vinyl. It's poorly produced and about as basic as Kiss' *Kiss*, but released far too many years later to be acceptable. At the same time, I know it was popular, so it resonated with someone. I was working at a music store when this was released. While a lot of 80s rock sold to a wide age range, this was pretty much selling to 14-16 year old boys.

Brian Seeley: It's a great album! Mötley Crüe's first big step towards the big time. It's a hard, heavy, dark and aggressive album. So many great songs from start to finish. I can't think of one song I want to skip to go on to the next.

Greg Pitts: I did like this album. A lot. But I was 15 also. I still like to hear these songs. Is Vince a good singer. No. Not close. Is Tommy drummer of the year. Nope. But of them all, Mick is way underrated.

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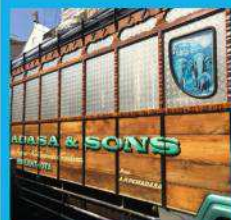


ROCK'N'ROLL GOINGS-ON IN THE TWITTERSPHERE

ROBERT PLANT

@RobertPlant

"There are no foreign lands. It is the traveler only who is foreign." - Robert Louis Stevenson
#AventuresBeyondTheFootlights



CAPTAIN SENSIBLE

@sensiblecaptain

Brighton station... The only railway terminus with a curved canopy. As far as I know.
#punktrainspotter

STEVE HACKETT

@HackettOfficial

Passing Mount Fuji on the bullet train... Such an iconic sight... Japan is a stunningly beautiful country!



STEVEN TYLER

@IamStevenT

I am ecstatic that the House Judiciary passed the Music Modernization Act onto the house floor to the Senate. I am a proud member of SONA & we are changing these outdated laws that unfairly hold down songwriters and other music creators from fair pay. @wearesonaLA

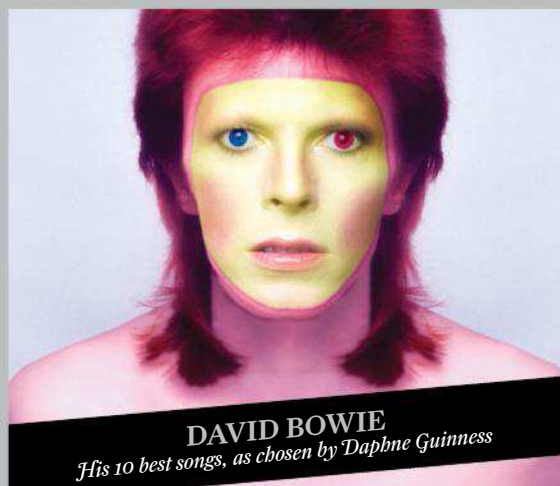
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Making its world premiere tomorrow night at the kickoff of #LukewarmWaterLive at the @SaengerNOLA, the inflatable Pink Torpedo!

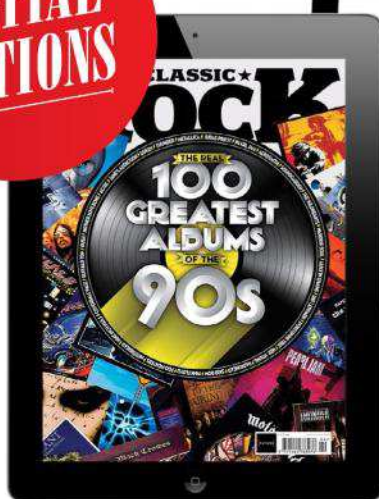
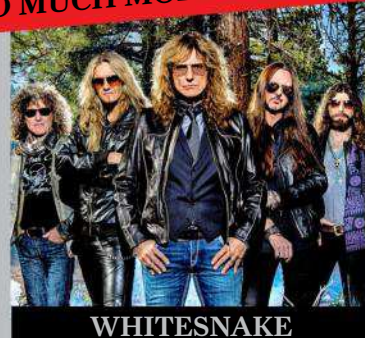
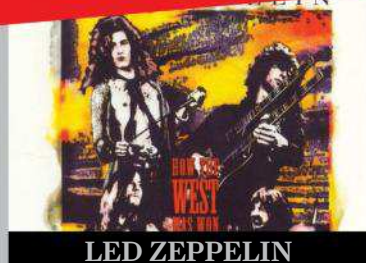


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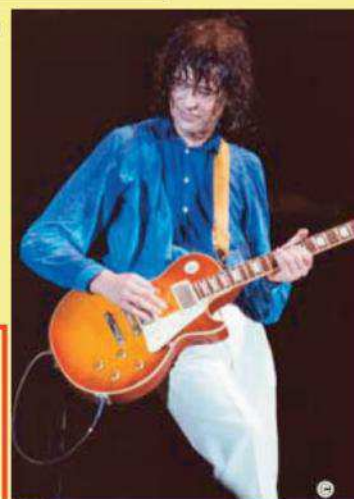
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18 PAGES

100% ROCK

THE HARD STUFF

The Ultimate
ROCK REVIEWS
Section

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EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM

ian.fortnam@futurenet.com



P **100**

Metallica

Metal icons revisit watershed EP. Again.
Is it still worth \$5.98 today?

THE HARD STUFF ALBUMS



Black Stone Cherry

Family Tree MASCOT

Southern-fried Kentucky rockers poised to take Skynyrd's crown.



It's easy to forget that Black Stone Cherry are on album number six – the quartet are still full of all the fresh-faced enthusiasm and charm they had when they first rolled in from Kentucky with their self-titled debut 12 years ago. With a sound that emulates their Deep South heroes but has an added heaviness, they quickly won the hearts of southern rock fans around the world.

You know what you're getting with BSC – they're not about to U-turn into punk any time soon. But over the years, their albums have become more layered, polished and full of arena-worthy choruses. Once described as being on the fringes of heavy metal, they've dispensed with that on their last few albums and have instead embraced those down-home roots more fully.

Opener *Bad Habit* is like two tracks, with a stomping groove breakdown halfway through mixed with swirling guitar riffs – BSC love a guitar solo – while *Burnin's* uplifting chorus is infectious. Many songs take Skynyrd-style riffs and build them into hard rock anthems, like the rolling, 70s-style *Carry Me On Down The Road*, while *Get Me Over You* sounds like a modern homage to Skynyrd's *I Ain't The One*.

Southern rock is no longer just played by those who hail from its homeland. And

while there shouldn't be geographical restrictions on anyone to make the music they love, the fact that BSC were born and bred in Kentucky undeniably gives them an authentic edge.

It also gives them more leeway to pile on the cheese, which they don't shy away from. They love to throw in over-the-top, tongue-in-cheek lyrics on party bombast songs that usually home in on either their home (*Southern Fried Friday Night*) or chasin' tail (*James Brown*, with the lyrics 'I will be your sex machine, just like James Brown'). But it's all good clean fun here, as the choice inclusion of the word 'Mother-funkin' on *You Got The Blues* confirms.

Then there's the sentimentality. Frontman Chris Robertson has always worn his heart on his sleeve, whether through frank interviews or sometimes syrupy lyrics. But the band have so much genuine warmth, and when the songs are this good, even cynics would find it hard not to belt along to the gospel-style chorus of *One Last Breath*.

With Lynyrd Skynyrd hanging up their Stetsons after a final tour of the US this summer, it may be BSC's chance to step into their shoes as the leading lights of southern rock.



Hannah May Kilroy

Foreigner

Foreigner With The 21st Century Symphony Orchestra & Chorus ARMUSIC

Classics given a new slant.



Let's face it,

Foreigner's music has always had an orchestral

drift. So it was perhaps inevitable that the band would reposition their songs in this direction, and it happened in May last year, at a show in Switzerland.

The current line-up are joined by a 58-piece orchestra and a 60-strong choir. The result is a nice balance between the rock musos and those of a more symphonic disposition. This works best on *I Want To Know What Love Is*, *Urgent*, *That Was Yesterday* and *Waiting For A Girl Like You* – these tunes have always leant towards a more expansive area anyway.

Less successful are *Cold As Ice*, *Feels Like The First Time* and *Double Vision* – they always work best when stripped back. However, this is mostly a successful interpretation.



Malcolm Dome

Demob Happy

Holy Doom SO RECORDINGS

Inventive second from Brit-grunge's leading lights.



Good and evil, God and Lucifer, Ant and Dec... who among us doesn't contain

a touch of both? Brighton's Demob Happy certainly do – their second album details the 'Holy' and the 'Doom' that battled within singer Matthew Marcantonio in the depressive aftermath of their 2015 debut *Dream Soda*.

But even while tracks like *Fake Satan*, *Liar In Your Head* and the frenetic *Spinning Out* show his emotional demons, the tug-of-war for Demob's musical souls remains between Royal Blood and *Magical Mystery Tour*.

Psychedelic pop tunes merge with granite blues riffs to create a hypnotic miasma akin to a harder rocking Tame Impala, with some gloriously spaced-out moments – take the title track's impression of Josh Homme hallucinating himself as a Smurf, or when *Runnin' Around* stops being a buzz-glam brute to zone out in Jim Morrison's mesaline meditation pyramid for a minute.

Ditching the hyperactive stylistic shifts and media brainwashing conspiracy

theories of *Dream Soda*, *Holy Doom* is a far weightier and worthier affair but still melodic, dreamy and frothy enough that even the gristliest chunks never stick in the throat.



Mark Beaumont

Kobra And The Lotus

Prevail II NAPALM

Inject the venom.



Part two of what was originally conceived as a double album,

Prevail II picks up where last year's part one left off and delivers an almighty sonic battering ram right between the eyes. Just like on part one, KATL punch out an endlessly inventive tsunami of riffs, the sound compressed to oblivion for maximum aural destruction, with vocalist Kobra Paige riding imperiously on top like some leather-lunged Valkyrie.

Paige's voice is the star of the show, clear as a (hell's?) bell and the perfect operatic complement to the symphonic, soaring power metal of *My Immortal*, *You're Insane* and *Velvet Roses* – we're talking beauty and brutality in equal measure, crunching riffage with a canny ear for melody.

It's a pretty efficient lesson in modern metal, the only false step being the slightly odd cover of Fleetwood Mac's *The Chain* tagged on to the end. Otherwise, this is a fitting and successful sequel.



Essi Berelian

Melvins

Pinkus Abortion Technician

IPECAC

Have my new speakers arrived, or has everything got louder?!



Melvins – famously, a primordial raw metal influence on

fellow Washington state band Nirvana, both in DIY no-shit-taken attitude and music – have been around since the dawn of time, it seems. Honed down to a core of 'King' Buzzo (deranged vocals, guitar) and Neil Young devotee Dale Crover (the heaviest drums in creation), the bass duties in recent years have fallen to various members of Butthole Surfers and Redd Kross.

Pinkus Abortion Technician is, as one might expect, part-tribute to the Buttholes' gloriously messy and demented *Locust Abortion*

Technician (a cover from which, *Graveyard*, features) and part blistered Sabbath doom metal madness. For this one (their, uh, 30th album?), Melvins have two bassists, one from each band – Jeff Pinkus (BS) and Steven McDonald (RK). And why not? Melvins have always been a law unto themselves.

Other standouts include a skewed version of *I Want To Hold Your Hand* and Buzzo doing his best Ozzy impersonation on *Don't Forget To Breathe*. Nasty, gleeful, twisted, rocking, this is as approachable as Melvins ever get. And *Pinkus Abortion Technician* still rocks harder than anything this side of... Melvins themselves. Melvins abide.



Everett True

The Ugly Kings

Darkness Is My Home

KOZMIK ARTIFACTZ

Power blues with an edge.



The Ugly Kings may have supported the likes of Rival Sons and

Airbourne (and, er, Papa Roach, but let's ignore that), but while they are similarly rooted in the blues, the Melbourne-based rockers are a grittier beast than their tour buddies – though you might have guessed that from their choice of debut album title.

Singer Russel Clark's voice instantly grabs your attention:

his rich, deep vocals are similar to those of Glenn Danzig or Josh Homme. In fact, their ability to take hard blues rock and twist and distort it into darker, more unique territories is akin to that of Queens Of The Stone Age – particularly in the sleazy, thumping basslines of *Raging Bull* – and has a similar eeriness to that of Swedish blues rockers Graveyard.

From the stomping blues of *Love Enemy* to the rich, yearning country twangs of *You & Me*, The Ugly Kings' brand of power blues is captivating.



Hannah May Kilroy

Spiders

Killer Machine SPINEFARM

Swedish four-piece turn retro-rock nostalgia into glam-punk rocket fuel.



Abashedly retro torch bearers for the classic-rocking 1970s and early 80s,

Spiders wear their influences very much on their sleeve on third album *Killer Machine*, which arrives wrapped in fabulously louche cover artwork complete with authentically vintage facial hair, leather trousers and lurex leggings.

The Gothenburg four-piece, already a Top 10 act in their native Sweden, stick well within their nostalgic comfort zone, typically defaulting to bluesy

pop-metal with a lightly punky edge. But their increasingly prominent new-wave aesthetic is a pleasing development, with singer Ann-Sofie Hoyles sounding like a cross between Kim Wilde and Penetration's Pauline Murray on sharp-riffed guitar-janglers like *Burning For You* and *Swan Song*. Slavish musical ancestor-worship can be a numbingly conservative dead end, of course, but Spiders seem to extract a kind of fresh-faced joy from ballsy raunch-queen lyrics and adrenalised guitar solos, as if they'd discovered The Runaways or the New York Dolls only last week.

One of their minor quirks is the occasional lyric into wonky second-language English, pleasingly off-kilter touches that add to the innocent charm of these lovingly rendered, not-quite note-perfect pastiches.



Stephen Dalton

A Perfect Circle

Eat The Elephant BMG

Sophisticated return for Tool's 'feminine' offshoot.



According to the press release, A Perfect Circle – the “emotional

and feminine” side project of Tool frontman Maynard James Keenan and guitarist Billy Howerdel – didn't re-form for sporadic gigs in 2010 at all.

Instead, they're releasing their fourth album in 14 years because Howerdel recently woke from the suspended animation he was placed in after 2004's *Emotive*, keen to make a new record and promote it via defunct outlets such as MySpace and, ahem, print media. You guys...

Such humour does infiltrate the music – there's a track named after the *Hitchhiker's Guide To the Galaxy* instalment *So Long, And Thanks For All The Fish* – but this mature, theatrical evolution of APC's four-million-selling early work is no laughing matter. The opening title track sets the album's elegant tone, Keenan husking emotive balladry to a lounge jazz backing, like the unlikely pianist in a beatnik bar.

Eat The Elephant gradually gains heft while staying intriguingly unpredictable. If *The Contrarian*, *Feathers*, *By And Down* *The River* and *The Doomed* are multi-segment, quasi-religious goth epics designed to appease Tool fans (“blessed are the fornicants, may we bend down to be their whores!” Keenan growls, clearly a *Love Island* fan), they're also misleading diversions to give Keenan and Howerdel breathing space for more frivolous fun.

Get The Lead Out could be a doom rock Alt-J, *Talktalk* is pure Depeche Bowie, *Hourglass* is a goddamn vocoder electro rap, and the Weezer-like *So*

Long... even references Princess Leia and Willy Wonka with a vaguely straight face.

Such satisfying sounds, prog metal heroes puncturing their own pomposity.



Mark Beaumont

Hercules Morse

Vita Boundary SELF-RELEASED

Debut album from Southampton stoner rockers.



Although they labour up familiar muddy hills and down

dales, their chops and changes reminding of Hüsker Dü and Swervedriver among others, it's hard to dislike Hercules Morse. They know their stuff and lace it with sardonic angst, best evidenced on *Everything Is Great*, a deeply sarcastic response to an innocently offered “How are you?”.

Their intensity is conveyed with lyrical eloquence rather than being merely a dull ache. *Clockwork's* darkly harmonic strains remind a little of The Invisible, while *War Within* speaks well about the State of Rock in the post-revolutionary era.

There's room for them to expand and distinguish themselves, but this is a very serviceable debut.



David Stubbs

ROUND-UP: PROG



Lazuli: très original, très magique, a band for all seasons.

Lazuli

Saison 8 L'Abeille Rôde



Eight seasons in a year – how much of a prog-rock concept is that? In their twentieth year together, accomplished French quintet Lazuli can be as fanciful as they like on their latest album, *Saison 8*, which springs from the traps with a joyous,

piano-tinkling opener in the shape of *J'Attends Un Printemps*.

There's a soupçon of *Wanted Dead Or Alive* (and *Nirvana*) in the swagger of *Mes Amis*, *Mes Frères*, before prog balance is restored by the Steven Wilson-esque darkness of *Les Côtes*. *Mes Semblables* raises its own Zeppelin/Hackett racket, then the semi-acoustic *Les 4 Mortes Saisons* swirls and enchants to the record's close.

All Legolas hair and dramatic nu-neo melodics, with the wonderful, unique sound of Claude Leonetti's léode (an instrument that's part guitar, part synth, part melodic saw, created by the player after a motorbike accident put a partial lid on his guitar-playing dexterity), here Lazuli show themselves as très original, très magique, a band for all seasons.



Awooga

Conduit Rocksmos



Signed to Amplifier man Sel Balamir's label, this Sheffield trio have blossomed since they were first introduced to

CR at a label showcase in 2016. Gargantuan grooves and molten lead heft weld to cosmic raga grunge with *Temporal*. Deftones d-tuned mantras follow, then a Tool-like *Waterhole*, some Mastodon twiddle and, best of all, the crushing psychedelic sustain of *Blue Rose*.



Mothertongue

Where The Moonlight

Snows Bad Elephant



Ploughing a furrow at the indie end of prog are this sextet from Manchester. Apart from having great hair (their words), the band show a slick splicing of styles from BJH to XTC on this, their second album. Some blues here (*Ofelia*), some folk there (*It's Getting Weird*) and a bit of straight prog-pop (*Earthbound*) round up an intriguing induction.



Dean Ween Group

Rock2 Schnitzel



Prog party record klaxon! In the spirit of Primus, Zappa and his own warped alternative outfit Ween, here Dean presents solo album two, with blush-tastic titles such as *Fingerbangin'*, as well as the generally silly *Don't Let The Moon Catch You Crying*. It's *Anchorman* meets Butthole Surfers, Funkadelic smooching with Santana, plus brass, plus Melvins, plus Les Dawson. Brilliant.



Wess Meets West

A Light Within

The Fracture Hassle



Well, here's a pretty record. Pretty for full-on instrumental post-rock, that is. Written during the winter of 2016 in a cabin in the woods of Portland, Maine, the New Haven group channel life, death and the beauty of nature for their third album. *Trail Of Dead*, And So I Watch You From Afar and Eno mesh in these 11 stirring, chromatic essays.





Reef

Revelation EARMUSIC

After the blink of an eye that lasted 18 years, they're back with their fifth album.



Success and fame, as they say about greatness, was rather thrust upon Reef, and they didn't always wear it well. To an outsider it seemed that all they really wanted was to make their music – and achieve whatever came as a result in their own good time. They appeared to struggle with the work/life balance on a major label, although Sony helped them make and release four fine albums.

Nevertheless, after adding five new tracks to a 2003 'best of', Reef splintered. Singer Gary Stringer and bassist Jack Bessant stayed closest, and all four came together sporadically until, in 2014, Jesse Wood took over on guitar from Kenwyn House (who went off to form Goldray) and, with Dominic Greensmith back on the drum stool, Reef began again.

Don't be fooled by their new album's AC/DC-alike title-track opener, or the other full-throttle rocker, *Precious Metal*, the band have mellowed as well as improved while they've been away. The earliest evidence of this is Sheryl Crow duetting with Stringer on second track *My Sweet Love* – an unexpected and lovely touch. Reef then inject a Caribbean feel for *Provide* – which might have been at home on a latter-day Joe Cocker album. The musical compass swings again for *How I Got Over*, which starts with the piano hook from Otis Redding's *Hard To Handle*, then shifts

immediately to a gospel vibe complete with hallelujah chorus.

Reef? That rockin' little band that sang *Place Your Hands*? Yup! But they're all grown up now.

Their decision to re-hire George Drakoulias, the former Black Crowes producer who'd been at the helm for Reef's platinum-selling second album *Glow* ('97) and its successor *Rides* ('99) – has clearly invigorated them. And so they give us bluesy love ballad *Don't Go Changing Your Mind*, *First Mistake*, on which, after a Cream-like intro, an acoustic guitar joins the mix to give an almost country feel, and *Darling Be Home Soon*, complete with female backing vocals, a brass section and a Sly & The Family Stone groove.

If you want rock from Reef, they still do, slowing down for *Just Feel Love*, a heavy-duty blues with a fuzzy guitar solo and driving drums, and shuffle by on a snake-hipped riff that turns *Ball And Chain* into a 21st-century *Hush*.

The album ends with shades of Traffic on *Like A Ship (Without A Sail)*, with the gospel choir again and Stringer signing off with a joyous high note near the end.

So don't be fooled by this album's title. Reef know where they're going. Good things come to those who wait.

★★★★★

Neil Jeffries

Shinedown

Attention Attention ATLANTIC

Album six charts their journey to the bottom and back.



Nothing saps a band's charm like constant success; winning

formulas often strip songwriting innovation, and who really can blame any artist who's riding high for wanting to stay there?

Case in point: Shinedown's near-effortless rise to the top, with records that were rich, colourful, hugely popular, and more anodyne with each release.

Then, at some point on tour, their singer Brent Smith fell off the wagon into a black hole of despair and threatened to take his band with him. Instead they helped him back and created a new album *Attention Attention*, that is full of sharp edges and hard turns.

A loose concept album that charts the lows, highs and subsequent recovery of its protagonist, sonically it's punchier, angrier even, than previous records. Take the furious strut of *Devil*, the feral, howling *Black Soul* and the half-spoken, self-loathing growl that is the title track. There's a recklessness in almost every track; *Pyro* levels an angry eye on the failings of the main character's parents: 'Set fire to the family tree,' he hisses, watching it burn.

★★★★★

Philip Wilding

Godsmack

When Legends Rise

SPINEFARM

Welcome maturity to the fore.



More than two decades and seven albums into their career,

Godsmack are not trying to compete with younger, tougher bands. While they might have begun in the nu metal sphere, *When Legends Rise* exposes a band who are not afraid to develop and show how experience has coloured their style.

When Legends Rise is more of a pop/rock album than anything else, with songs like *Bulletproof*, *Under Your Scars* and *Unforgettable* based on finely honed melodies which allow Sully Erna to accentuate the fact that he is an emotionally charged, charismatic vocalist. There's also a richness to Tony Rombola's guitar sound that adds immeasurably to the

overall impact.

There are still hints of the band's harsher earlier years, such as on *Take It To The Edge* and *Eye Of The Storm*, but overall this is an album which shows musical growth and finesse

★★★★★

Malcolm Dome

Dead Meadow

The Nothing They Need

XEMU

Twentieth year of psychedelic stoner yearning.



Jason Simon and Steve Kille's mission to brighten the Sabbath stoner

template with late-60s colours continues, this time influenced by the ancient Egyptian Book Of The Dead and America's modern repressive shadows.

I'm So Glad's psychedelic blues stalk and strut sets out the mission statement of a 'dream of people left alone'. 'I believe in freedom of heart,' Simon further clarifies. 'Above your knee, do as you please'. Dark hints of Manson buggies in the dunes are outweighed by an ache for real American liberty, somewhere out there in the woods or desert, or the head this record means to feed. The guitars, meanwhile, glimmer and snort before settling into something more ritualistic and Eastern.

Dead Meadow don't only throw loping retro shapes. Although these are notes from an underground that was basically dug 50 years ago, they crackle with contemporary need.

★★★★★

Nick Hasted

Birth Of Joy

Hyper Focus GLITTERHOUSE

Dutch courage.



There's nothing like the full-bore roar of a Hammond organ let off

the leash, conjuring progressive blues-rock badness at its crucial early-70s crossroads.

On their fifth album since 2009 and their first for the esteemed Glitterhouse label, hard-grafting Dutch psychedelic rockers Birth Of Joy invoke nothing less than the behemoth spirit of the mighty Graham Bond Initiation, bringing forward Gertjan Gutman's meaty organ for blazing volleys of swirling riffs and proto-prog classicism which singer/guitarist Kevin Stunnenberg and drummer Bob Hogerist enhance with frugging

grooves, exotic melodies and many lift-off moments.

It's exhilarating to hear a band audibly maturing with each release, the organ now a key bass-replacing element on tracks such as the motorik-driven *Join The Game*, atmospheric slowie *Sypdorkat* and stomping *Riff Raff*, nodding to a wild bygone era while dragging the beast howling into a present that often sorely needs something elemental and unpredictable.



Kris Needs

The Dead Daisies

Burn It Down

SPITFIRE MUSIC

Has the latest line-up delivered the goods?



Four albums and 16 musicians into their career, it's probably about time The

Dead Daisies proved they're more than music's version of the Harlem Globetrotters, able to call on rock's most spectacular players at the drop of a paycheck. After all, here's a band who've employed twice as many musicians in four years as Def Leppard have in 40.

Burn It Down suggests they're heading in the right direction. It's not an album stuffed with truly memorable songs, but they're making a lot of the right noises, and a quartet of tracks at the end of the record are genuinely

compelling. *Set Me Free* is a giant of a ballad – think Soundgarden's *Black Hole Sun* meets the blues – while *Dead And Gone* has an alluring, cocksure swagger. *Can't Take It With You* is a frenzied blast that tips a hat towards Montrose and early Aerosmith, and *Leave Me Alone* is a thumping climax. Sure, it's all meat and potatoes. But the cooking's pretty good.



Fraser Lewry

Daphne Guinness

Daphne & The Golden Chord

AGENT ANONYME

Glam-rocking fashionista returns with Tony Visconti back at the controls.

Anglo-Irish brewing heiress, fashion icon, inspiration to Lady Gaga and muse to the late Alexander McQueen, Daphne Guinness launched her rock career belatedly two years ago with *Optimist In Black*, which was produced by Tony Visconti, with David Bowie in occasional attendance. The 50-year-old fashionista enlists Visconti again on this second album, which covers similar musical ground with its darkly witty, semi-spoken chansons clothed lavishly in vintage psych, glam and chamber-pop couture.

A wealthy socialite dabbling in pop obviously smacks of dilettante vanity project, but Guinness mostly dodges such easy brickbats with her sharp-tongued lyrics and agreeably

sardonic vocal delivery, which falls somewhere between Nico's glacial hauteur and Peter Cook's withering proto-punk creation Drimble Wedge in 60s comedy film *Bedazzled*. The orchestral weepie *But I'm Not* and the booming, Spector-ish ballad *It's Alright* are both elegantly barbed take-downs of narcissistic lovers, while glammed-up boogie-stomps like *It's A Riot* allow Visconti to revisit his Bolan-era back pages.



Stephen Dalton

Reigning Days

Eclipse

Second album from the best thing to come out of Devon since clotted cream.



In the four years since Reigning Days' debut album *Opera Of Love*, we've had an EP, the occasional single and the decision to drop the slightly unwieldy 'These' from the band's original name. It's hardly Def Leppard's work ethic, but Reigning Days clearly take things at their own speed. In that time they've also become a part of Marshall Records' select roster. Thankfully, *Eclipse* has been worth the wait.

A hard, colourful production captures perfectly the trio's punchy choruses, crisp phrasing (in that regard they can flit effortlessly from Artie Monkeys

to vintage Bush in the blink of an eye) and a sense of melody that will see them climbing up festival bills all summer long. Especially good are the undulating crash and roll of *Gravity* and the deft change of gears that is *Thrones*.



Philip Wilding

Death By Unga Bunga

So Far So Good So Cool

JANSEN

Norwegian power poppers' intermittently fizzy fifth. Straight outta Moss, Norway, seemingly via a Midwest American town where the top is always down and the radio always on, Death By Unga Bunga have slowly built a following with four albums of lovingly crafted, high-octane guitar pop with a touch of garage grit under its fingernails. And there are no unwelcome surprises or diversions from the formula on this admirably short-and-to-the-point 34-minute album of chugging, radio-friendly stompers.

But while their name alone might be good enough to grab the attention, the music is rarely quite as arresting. When you play this kind of unpretentious, timeless but generic guitar pop, the hooks need to be sharp enough to snag us within a couple of listens. Yet while *Haunt Me*'s choppy chords and lovelorn chorus gets its feet

under the table of your consciousness very effectively, other tracks fall just short of being memorable, despite briefly diverting touches such as the twin guitars sprayed all over *Cynical* and *Soldier*, and *Boys'* rabble-rousing chorus.

Killed by Death? Not quite.



Johnny Sharp

The Dark Light

Keep Off The Grass

UNKNOWN PLEASURES

Garage daze revisited.



Mashing The Beatles together with the Stooges and a very big

helping of Oasis, multi-national band The Dark Light's debut is a solid but uneven ride as it veers from grimy blasts of lo-fi noise like the raucous title track, *She Likes It* and the fantastic *Watching You Burn*, to more sedate tunes such as *Looking For Love*. When they lay down acres of fuzz and squalls of wah-wah they sound brazen and confident, but when they dial down the aggression the results are more like leftovers from the Noel Gallagher songbook; *Higher Than The Light* and *Be Mine* plod to the finish line like also-rans instead of like thoroughbreds. More Iggy and less Liam next time, please.



Essi Berelian

ROUND-UP: BLUES



Joe Bonamassa: nobody covers the guitar greats like he can.

Joe Bonamassa

British Blues

Explosion Live



Think of a seminal blues titan, and chances are Joe Bonamassa can do you a decent facsimile. The guitarist has previously channelled his inner Chicago bluesman with 2015's

Muddy Wolf shows, so he was never going to struggle to inhabit the white-boy boomers at this 2016 show from the Greenwich Naval College.

Jeff Beck is to the fore, the temperature rising with the knuckleduster licks of *Rice Pudding* and *Spanish Boots*, and Jimmy Page gets his due with a coruscating *Tea For One* and a steroid-abusing *How Many More Times*.

But it's Clapton who gets the lion's share, and while Bonamassa fiddles the time line (1974's breezy *Mainline Florida* and 1989's *Pretending* are a long way from the Ealing Club), those cuts are played with the same scholarly fire as Beano fodder like *Double Crossing Time*. JoBo is the finest tribute act you'll hear – but he shouldn't make a career of it.



Ma Polaine's Great Decline

The Outsider



London roots duo Decline live or die on Beth Packer's vocal: a jagged, jazz-club holler, pitched somewhere between Billie Holiday and Norah Jones. It's the perfect counterpoint to Clinton Hough's wonderfully woozy guitar soundscapes, although one suspects *The Outsider* is too downbeat to be welcomed in by the mainstream.



Dana Fuchs

Love Lives On



Speaking of artists weaving personal tragedy into creative gold, bourbon-voiced New Yorker Dana Fuchs sounds supremely confident on a fourth album that explores Memphis soul. The naked title track saluting her fallen mother is as desolate and beautiful as they come, while the raging defiance of *Ready To Rise* and the country-flavoured *Fight My Way* suggest a woman still swinging.



By Henry Yates

Andy Gunn

Too Many Guitars

To Give Up Now



The Scot's back-story is staggering: born with haemophilia, Gunn was infected during the dirty-blood scandal of the 80s, fell into addiction and tracked this album with the feeling fading from his hands. He performs gems such as *Sorry Mess Blues* and *Warm Heart Blue* with feel, poise and the urgency of a man who hears the ticking clock.



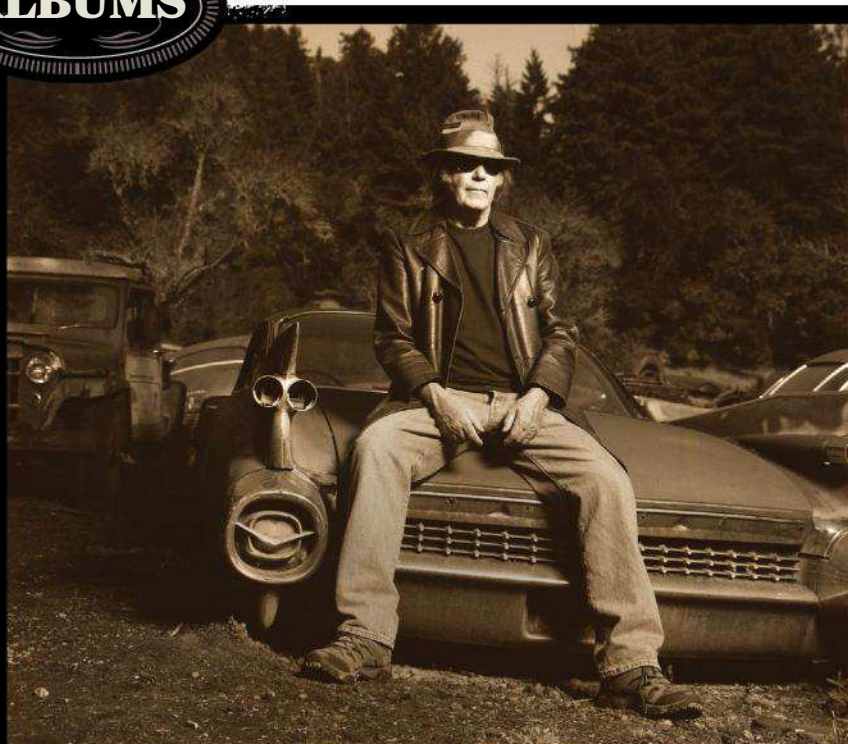
Errol Linton

Packing My Bags



The Brixton bandleader blows one hell of a harp: his fluttering intro to *Break 'Em Down* and *Wish You Would's* rat-a-tat puff would make James Cotton and Little Walter smile down. He's a sharp songwriter, too: try the title track, which shifts from pub-bounce blues to reggae chop. Linton exploring his dual roots in a vocal somewhere between a wheeze and a whisper.





Neil Young

Roxy: Tonight's The Night Live

Neil Young & Promise Of The Real

Paradox (Original Music From The Film) REPRISE

Snapshot of past glories, plus a curio from his autumn years.

These releases show two Neil Youngs. The first is him at 27 and at his peak, the second at 72, a little careworn and commercially reduced but still questing. From September 1973, *Roxy: Tonight's The Night Live* (8/10) sees Young christen the infamous nightclub on Sunset ("First topless girl we get up here gets these boots!" he hoots, in a nod to the Roxy's strip-joint past).

While another announcement that "we're gonna have a few new songs" might reasonably elicit groans, these are no ordinary songs, but the meat of the *Tonight's The Night* album that he would release two years later. It's strange, and wonderful, to hear these now-cherished songs take their first teetering steps. The title track sets the unfussy tone, all cardboard-box drums and bellowing vocals, but the harmonies are celestial and the a-capella kiss-off sublime. *Mellow My Mind* tests Young's upper register to destruction, but the wistful beauty makes it through, while the mellow *Speakin' Out* sees Nils Lofgren hectored for a scratchy paper bag of a guitar solo.

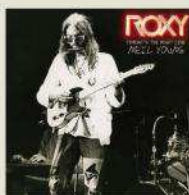
Atmosphere is king here; the production catches every rustle of the 500-strong audience, and you'll still be tickled by Young's banter, which belies the

death that surrounded him in this period ("My name is Glenn Miller," he announces at one point, inexplicably). It all makes *Roxy* a snapshot worth returning to.

It's fair to say that Daryl Hannah's fantasy western film *Paradox*, starring Young as a prospector, isn't packing them in like *Avengers: Infinity War*. The soundtrack (6/10) may fare better. With some success, Young paints a dusty portrait of a half-imaginary America. *Hey* is a feedback-shriek instrumental that evokes a Chevy carving through the Mojave Desert, *Peace Trail* is a wide-open-sky gem that feels wild and free, while *Cowgirl Jam* is stupendous, a vintage Young showcase of instrumental assault and battery.

Frustratingly, these highlights are punctuated by the six *Paradox Passage* instrumentals, which desperately miss a visual accompaniment to hang off. *Passage One* deals in echo-chamber histrionics that aren't going to give David Gilmour any sleepless nights, *Three* is a raw acoustic doodle complete with scuffing boots, *Five* a sweet but unnecessary guitar solo. Hit and miss, then, but the 27-year-old Young would surely be pleased to find his future self still taking risks.

Henry Yates



Blitzkrieg

Judge Not! MIGHTY MUSIC

They're all revved up and ready to go.

Was there ever a better name for a heavy metal band than Blitzkrieg? 'A military term describing use of overwhelming force and rapid speed.' Sheesh, that sums up the music of these Newkie veterans in a nuclear-powered nutshell.

These days it seems every band from the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal era claims to have influenced Metallica. But the truth is that Lars and co. were judicious in their choice of inspiration – and Blitzkrieg were one of a select NWOBHM pack. Does this heavyweight heritage weigh on the shoulders of veteran singer Brian Ross and his grizzled cohorts? Does it fuck. Blitzkrieg's first recorded new material since 2013 is old-fashioned thrash metal at its foulest, summed up perfectly by the title of track five of 11: *All Hell Is Breaking Loose*. But dig deeper and you'll discover intelligence glimmering behind the all-out mayhem, with thought-provoking songs about modern-day terrorism, Anne Rice's *The Vampire Lestat*, Dorian Gray and, er... Mario, the great bird of Armageddon.

Can we survive the blitzkrieg? Yes – only barely.

Geoff Barton

Ross The Boss

By Blood Sworn AFM

All men continue to play on 10.



It's really about time the guy who invented power metal cashed in. Ross

The Boss is, of course, the former loin-cloth abusing riff warrior behind both NYC proto-punks The Dictators and the heaviest band of all time ever, Manowar.

Ross's new solo album skews much closer to the chest-thumping, Valhalla-hailing macho-metal of the latter. Aided greatly by the remarkable vocals of Mark Lopez – gritty as Staley, belty as Halford – Boss tears through a big, meaty pile of bear-fightin' music, from the scorching street rock of *Devil's Day* to the epic power-metal/grunge mash-up of *Among The Bones* and *We Are The Night*. Expect fury, expect high-pitched wailing, expect nimble-fingered speed-metal majesty. None of it sounds remotely contemporary, but none of it sounds dated, either. It's like Ross floats

effortlessly in his very own bare-chested, blood-splattered, forever-heavy True Metal world forever. As it should be, really. Posers get lost.

Sleazegrinder

Steve Ellis

Boom! Bang! Twang!

SONY MUSIC

Belated boost for stellar singer's underdeveloped solo career.



Forever best known as the man who sang The Love Affair's

worldwide hit *Everlasting Love* (a UK No.1 50 years ago), Steve Ellis also fronted hard rockers Widomaker from 1975-77.

Now, as his greatest hit gets re-released, comes this new showcase collection that ranges from reggae (a cover of Jimmy Cliff's *Sitting In Limbo*) to heart-wrenching soul (his take on William Bell's *I Forgot To Be Your Lover*). There are nods to his 60s roots with covers of the Gerry & The Pacemakers hit *Don't Let The Sun Catch You Crying* and Harsh Reality's classic *Tobacco Ash Sunday*, plus new tracks in that style, including two co-written by Paul Weller: the single *Lonely No More* and *Cry Me A River*. Best of all, though, are three sparsely arranged songs that exhibit Ellis's voice to stunning effect: opener (Tim Hardin's) *Black Sheep Boy* and the closing pairing *Glory Bound* and *Oh Death*.

Neil Jeffries

Haggard Cat

Challenger EARACHE

Riffs, riffs and more riffs.

Following the split of their previous band, the chaotic hardcore wrecking crew Heck, vocalist and guitarist Matt Reynolds and drummer Tom Marsh refused to go quietly into the night. Instead the Nottingham duo decided to sacrifice their remaining limbs in the name of rock'n'roll, rebranded themselves intriguingly as Haggard Cat and embraced the power of the groove.

The thirsty spirit of their previous band lives on, but *Challenger* tones down the erratic time signatures, and is instead stacked with the kind of muscular, gonzo riffs that would make Royal Blood weep. *Bone Shaker*'s muscular riff could easily have slotted on to that duo's debut – that is until

Reynolds starts shrieking blue murder over the top – while *The Patriot* and *American Graffiti* thunder along satisfyingly like *Songs For The Deaf*-era Queens Of The Stone Age.

If you like your riffs turbo-charged and beefy with an edge, then get involved.



Dannii Leivers

The Sheepdogs

Changing Colours DINE ALONE

Retro boogie for the here and now.



Thanks to an unlikely *Rolling Stone* cover feature that rescued them

from debt and problem drinking, Canada's Sheepdogs have done pretty well in modern times. Even so, you suspect the five-piece would rewind the clock to their cultural sweet-spot of the early 70s in a heartbeat.

The title *Changing Colours* title refers to new influences stirred into the band's boogie-rock palette that drove 2015's acclaimed *Future Nostalgia*, but the controls stay welded to a retro sound that few do better. Opener *Nobody* could be a great lost West Coast session, all brown-sounding guitar chords and fuzz-headed organ. Just as irresistible is the uproarious *I've Got A Hole Where My Heart Should Be*, and *Saturday Night* with its roistering groove and

clanking twin guitars (a recurring theme the band call "guitar-mony"). Risks are taken, and pay off, such as the louche, Havana sway of *The Big Nowhere* and the soul bag of *I Ain't Cool*, while you fully expect Phil Lynott to strike up on *Kiss The Brass Ring*.

A spot of editing would have been wise, with a glut of instrumentals costing the 17-track collection some focus. But further acclaim surely awaits, and these dogs deserve their day.



Henry Yates

Belly

Dove BELLY TOURING

90s alt.rockers return with a renewed sense of purpose and confidence.

Once upon a time, a five-year gap between albums was deemed a cause for raised eyebrows. Yet here are Belly with a new album 23 years after its predecessor. Although the commercial failure of their second, 1995's *King*, hit the band hard enough for them to disband and disappear from view, the music on *Dove* finds a band not only reinvigorated, but also taking enormous pleasure in its activities.

Considering it was written collaboratively by singer-guitarist Tanya Donnelly, bassist Gail Greenwood, guitarist Tom Gorman and drummer Chris Gorman via a system

of file-sharing ideas, *Dove* is a remarkably coherent album, held together by the glue of infectious melody, gutsy instrumentation and a palpable sense of positivity. Consequently it's far better than was dared hoped for.

Although some of the quirkier edges of 1993's *Star* have been sanded down, the sheer joy at the heart of *Girl* plugs directly into the band's original charm, while *Shiny One*'s lolling grooves and the purposeful stride of *Mine* typify this winning return to action and form.



Julian Marszalek

Stryper

God Damn Evil FRONTIERS

More riffage. vicar?



It took them a few years after reuniting in 2005, but after revisiting

their roots via songs from the likes of Judas Priest and Black Sabbath on *The Covering* and re-recording some of their own early material on *Second Coming*, Stryper have regained their metal mojo.

Instead of their 80s-era straight split between metal and ballads, on *God Damn Evil* they now deliver ear-worm melodies and rippling power chords simultaneously, with hefty riffs, heftier choruses and twin-guitar harmonies maximising the

impact of these well-crafted songs. The screamed chorus and death metal growls on *Take It To The Cross* push the heavy level further than they've gone before, but *Lost*, *Can't Live Without Your Love* and *The Valley* find them on vintage form.



Rich Davenport

Tesseract

Sonder KSCOPE

Tech-metal visionaries take another step forward.

Taken from author John Koenig's *Dictionary Of Obscure Sorrows*, 'Sonder' is defined as "the realisation that each random passer-by is living a life that's as vivid and complex as your own". It's an apt title for Tesseract's fourth album, from a band who have always been inspired by visionary experimentation while moulding their proggy tech metal into unexpected shapes.

Sonder revisits the sonics of their back catalogue, merging the menacing groove of debut *One* with the ethereal soundscapes and accessible songcraft of 2014's *Polaris*. It makes for a subtle evolution in tone and shade, but these tracks carve their own space within the band's meticulously crafted cosmos. Vocalist Dan Tompkins's voice sounds better than ever soaring on the dreamy opulence of *Juno*, which is perfectly balanced

by King, a texturally deep, labyrinth-like track that snakes in myriad directions.

Eleven years into their career, Tesseract are still thriving.



Dannii Leivers

Riot V

Armor Of Light NUCLEAR BLAST

Power-metal mania.



Okay, there's no way this album can be compared to those released

by the original Riot in the late 70s/early 80s, which are American metal classics. But while Riot V still retain in their name and sound part of that heritage, thankfully they have moved on, and in doing so have come up with a thunderous album that deserves to be judged on its own merits.

It's a furious rush of power-metal glory that has its own freshness and fury. Vocalist Michael Hall has a fine, concussive delivery, complemented by the guitar rush of Mike Flyntz and Nick Lee. This comes through on *Victory*, *Messiah* and *Burn The Daylight*, all of which betray influences from Accept and Judas Priest, as well as acknowledging the first two Riot albums.

It's an album of tightly focused 21st-century metal.



Malcolm Dome

ROUND-UP: SLEAZE



Dead Furies: swaggering, obnoxious, full-tilt gonzo rock'n'roll.

Dead Furies

Rock City A Go Go SELF-RELEASED

[HTTPS://DEADFURIES.BANDCAMP.COM](https://deadfuries.bandcamp.com)



If you're wondering where all the good times went, apparently they went to Estonia. Straight outta Tallin, Dead Furies are the most rip-snorting sleaze-punk band I've heard since the

Black Halos called it a day. Just imagine it: a pitch-black night-time world full of flick-knives, greasy hair, high-top sneakers, stolen cars, cheap whisky, working-class zeroes and desperate hopefuls all served up in two-minute wallops of chainsaw guitars and fist-pumping, burn-the-jailhouse-down scream-along choruses. You get it, right? This is the kinda shit we should all be listening to, all the time. It's

swaggering, obnoxious, full-tilt gonzo rock'n'roll created by three dead-enders with nowhere to go and all night to get there. Influences should be obvious given the album title, but if you need it spelled out then they probably dig the Dead Boys and the Hellacopters and Iggy and the Backyard Babies before they turned into Def Leppard. A total jammer.



The Needs

The Most Elegant

Hanged Men SELF-RELEASED

[HTTPS://THENEEDS1.BANDCAMP.COM](https://theneeds1.bandcamp.com)



The Needs have been around since '89 and they sound like the band that's playing at the dangerous-looking club with the throbbing neon sign on the lip of the highway in the desert in every 90s road movie ever made. They don't wear skull make-up and mariachi outfits, but if they did you'd go: "Yeah, that makes sense".



Plutonium Baby

Blast! Sci-fi Music For Contemporary Freaks

AREA PIRATA

[HTTPS://AREAPIRATAREC.BANDCAMP.COM](https://areapiratarec.bandcamp.com)



Fuelled by a wobbly roller-rink organ that will give you the spins, Italy's Plutonium Baby offer up a wild batch of jumpy garage rockers that make you wanna vomit up your Coca-Cola from pogging too hard. This might be a concept album. It's definitely an all-night rock'n'roll dance party.



By Sleazegrinder

The Dead Rats

G.O.A.T SELF-RELEASED

[HTTPS://THEDEADRATS.BANDCAMP.COM](https://thedeadrats.bandcamp.com)



If the devil was from Woolongong, Australia – and doesn't that sound like some place he'd hail from? – then this would be his fave record, no doubt. Imagine if Venom and Rose Tattoo were the same band, and they all arrived at the gig with, like, broken bottles jammed into their necks. That's the Dead Rats. Definitely not for the faint of heart.



The Sperts

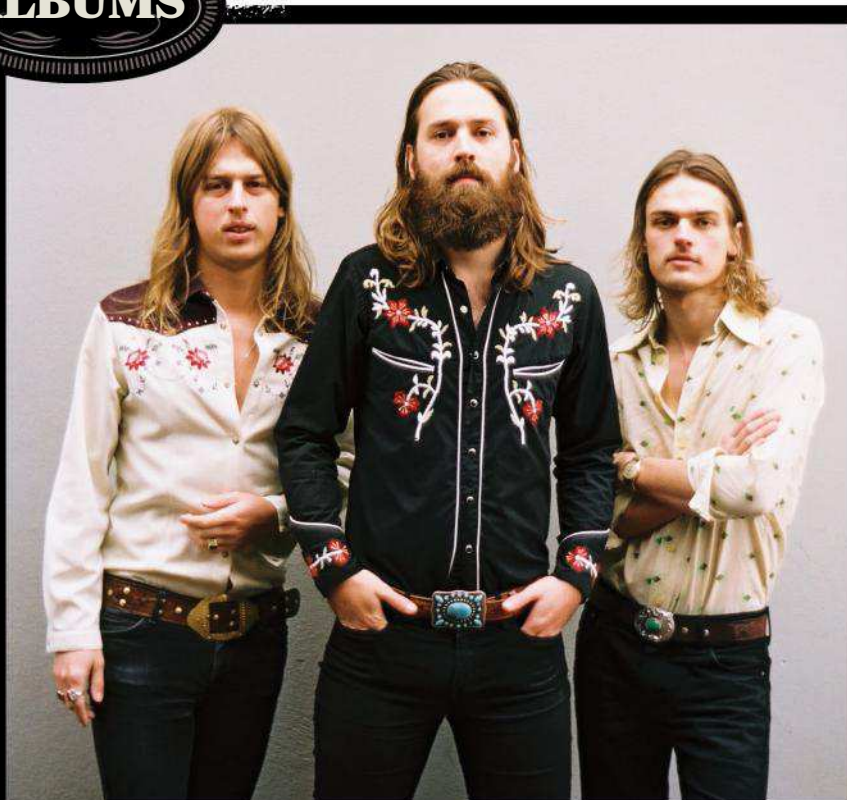
Shed Some Blood

[HTTPS://SPERTS.BANDCAMP.COM](https://sperts.bandcamp.com)



Melbourne's The Sperts are a bunch of evil, sadistic motherfuckers who wanna ruin your world; sax-skrinking outlaws who make music that sounds like drunk dogs chewing off each other's ears. They like The Stooges and hate everything else, and they're probably my fave thing of all time ever. Or at least for the duration of this monstrous EP.

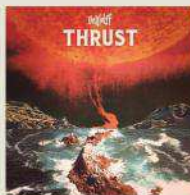




DeWolff

Thrust MASCOT

Hungry like DeWolff: Dutch trio deliver a classic rock master class.



Rock doesn't get much more classic in style or exuberantly convincing than this. Not a note sounds as if it was played later than 1978, or indeed in Utrecht in 2017, as is the unlikely case here (somewhere with both Zep and Allmans sessions bleeding in through the walls seems more credible).

But within their own gleefully built parameters, DeWolff's arrangements are so imaginatively freewheeling, and their spirit so open-hearted, that they brim with versatile vigour in the 21st century. This eighth album by a trio still not out of their twenties is a blueprint for classic rock as an enduring form.

Singer-guitarist Pablo van de Poel and drummer brother Luka have one not-so-secret weapon in Hammond organist Robin Piso, whose gorgeous, soulful country sound joins van de Poel's grainy croon in *Once In A Blue Moon*. Pastiche is lightly worn and loving. *Swain* could retire on its great title, instead assembling a grab-bag of knowingly second-hand phrases – 'son of a preacher man', 'who was fooling who?' – and smothering them in stampeding, creamy gospel harmonies.

Similarly, *Sometimes* is an initially unimpressive song absorbed by its arrangement's sultry atmosphere, and a Hammond solo's exploratory, languid climb.

In a new development, DeWolff think nothing of engaging with contemporary ills. *Big Talk* is distinguished not just by its whiplash guitars and chain-rattle, echo-chamber cymbals, but its intended dismissal of anti-refugee Dutch extremist Geert Wilders. Their aim is more dead-eye explicit on *Deceit & Woo*. 'He's the captain of a sinking ship,' van de Poel warns, 'the hand at the end of a cracking whip... he's going to grab you by the pussy if you don't watch out.'

Typically for this bunch, Trump is targeted as much as anything for being innately anti-blues. This revelation is followed by a hushed beauty of a guitar solo, cut by van de Poel muttering, 'Suck it to me.' DeWolff rock back in again, then dismiss all thought of pestilent politicians with a coda that builds like commandos creeping across moonlit rocks, before a final all-out assault of cleansing, feedbacking noise. Whatever your politics, it's fucking great.

They close with the heartfelt *Outta Step & Ill At Ease*. DeWolff channel The Band as van de Poel takes on Levon Helm's vocal spirit, sighing: 'And I can't even pour myself a glass of wine.' His guitar's stoically defiant attitude ploughs on anyway, the Dutch flatlands becoming Woodstock in his head.



Nick Hasted

Breeders

All Nerve 4AD

Alt.rock titans reunited and making a splash once again. Kim Deal's life features plenty of conflict and disruption, which underpinned many of the Pixies' finest moments. Yet *All Nerve* effortlessly demonstrates that harmony can be just as thrilling.

This Breeders revival displays plenty of edge, but with sister Kelley, plus long-term bassist Josephine Wiggs and drummer Jim Macpherson, the sound is honed, not a moment wasted, as one memorable riff follows another.

Kim and Kelley's massed, dense guitars are relentless, but endlessly shifting. On *Wait In The Car* they're claustrophobic and menacing, on *Spacewoman*, majestic and uplifting. Maybe it's simplistic to suggest the twin guitars lock into each other so perfectly, then separate to follow complementary routes, because they're played by sisters. But they do, all the same.

Spacewoman is especially beautiful, the theme a message to a woman orbiting above us – 'How lonely does it feel?' – and a meditation on how we can be lonely in the midst of a crowd.

Like most of the album, there's a special grace and intelligence to its ebb and flow: the muscular guitars kick in when the narrator describes a crowded baseball stadium, then they pause for moments of dreamy, fragile contemplation, as Kim addresses her counterpart circling the planet. Loneliness has rarely felt so uplifting.



Paul Trynka

Malady

Toinen Toista SVART

Take a trip to 70s Finland. The lush, hazy introduction to Finnish proggers Malady's second album, with its opening title track, transports you to a sun-dappled 70s summer's day. With rich yet soft synths and pastoral wistfulness, they would have been a perfect fit to soundtrack Sofia Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides*.

The album retains this tranquil glow throughout its five tracks, but varies its execution. *Laulu Sisaruksille* is composed of smooth strings, while *Tiedon Kehtolaulu* is flute-led, fluid jazz fusion.

The band's swirling sound is illustrated best in the 23-minute closing track *Nurja Puoli*, where all their elements combine into a vast and varied piece of fuzzy,

groove-driven, experimental prog. Malady create a sense of balmy nostalgia while also making modern prog that does the genre proud.



Hannah May Kilroy

Death Wheelers

I Tread On Your Grave

RIDING EASY

Death Wheelers fire all their guns at once.



Woolly Canadian mammoths Death Wheelers

take a unique approach to the tried and true stoner-fuzz model in that they shut the fuck up and let the endless ooze of hairy riffs do the talking.

The conceit here is that *Tread* is the soundtrack to an imaginary early-70s low-budget biker flick, à la *Werewolves On Wheels* or *Satan's Sadists*. They have a plot worked out for you already, something about a zombie biker gang, but you can obviously tailor the experience to your own interests/fetishes.

While we're clearly treading wildly and recklessly into revisionist history with DW's hoary, sweat-soaked, Atomic Bitchwax-y stonerescapes – vintage biker movie soundtracks were a melange of Arrows surf-rockers and psychedelic hippie bullshit – it's still a fun, tight ride, peppered with cult-y movie dialogue samples. There's enough grit, guts and gnarly guitars to have you smelling the acrid stench of burning rubber right through the speakers.



Sleazegrinder

Dark Stares

Darker Days Are Here

TO STAY SELF-RELEASED

None-more-black debut from desolate alt.rockers.

It's amusing to learn that these gloomy alt.rockers once supported The Darkness – a mismatch akin to Leonard Cohen warming up for Coco The Clown – but that's the only chuckle to be had during this always bleak, sometimes brilliant debut.

The raw materials are grinding guitars, machine-like drums, spooky synths and Miles Kristian Howell's languid, unsettling, Homme-like croon. When Dark Stares fuse these to their best songs, they're electrifying. *Hips Don't Shake* and *Ordinary Way* are slinking and propulsive. *Cruise Control*'s frayed riffs and flyaway vocal evokes a less-

hysterical Muse, while *Their Game* is a standout, bruised but not quite broken.

Yet other songs – *Darker Days*, say, or *Sweet Rider 5* – don't evolve beyond a Black Rebel Motorcycle Club-style groove, and grow tedious.

Dark Stares do the doomy stuff extremely well, but to reach the stars, they may need to shake off the storm cloud over their heads.



Henry Yates

Red Sun Rising

Thread SPINEFARM/CONCORD/RAZOR & TIES.

Radio-friendly fourth album, where pop and shouting meet.



2015's *Polyester Zeal* didn't quite cross over, but it did mark the moment where Red Sun Rising stopped faffing about in the indie twilight and got on with trying to sell proper numbers of records.

Thread takes things a planets-aligning leap forwards. Mike Protich still sings like his life is in grave peril, especially on the White Stripesian *Evil Like You*, but they've gone for gold here, gleefully marrying no-holds-barred galloping guitars, new wave and a Jellyfish-like way with multitasking pop. And they do it without sounding as if they're box-ticking.

Deathwish has the catchiest of a bunch of catchy choruses, *Left*

For Dead begins like the heaviest ever cover of *Waterloo Sunset*, and *Stealing Life* is propelled by wave after wave of multi-layered harmonies. In an ideal world, *Thread* should be the one to accelerate Red Sun Rising's steady ascent. It might even happen in the real world too.



John Aizlewood

Praying Mantis

Gravity FRONTIERS.

Onwards and upwards. Praying Mantis' potential among the initial crop of NWOBHM front-runners was only partially fulfilled in the early 80s, management and line-up woes hampering their progress after cracking the charts with debut long-player *Time Tells No Lies*.

After years of dogged persistence, releasing albums for the Japanese market, they've enjoyed a higher profile closer to home in the last decade, and *Gravity* is a varied and satisfying collection from the same formation responsible for *Legacy*.

Building from that record's solid start, the band as a whole sound energised and increasingly confident here. Vocalist John Cuijpers gives a particularly assured account of himself on the ominous *Ghosts Of The Past* and 39 *Years*, an edgier rocker with soaring guitar harmonies and a rousing chorus, qualities also found in abundance on the title

track. *Keep It Alive*'s twisting riff nods to their NWOBHM roots, *Time Can Heal* echoes the kind of ballsy AOR Survivor used to specialise in, and *Final Destination* closes proceedings with a heavier, pounding attack.

On this evidence, Praying Mantis still have plenty to offer.



Rich Davenport

Maverick

Firebird BAD REPUTATION.

Maverick didn't come here to lose.



Cut from the same rock'n'roll cloth as AC/DC and Rose Tattoo, Aussies Maverick clearly have a firm grasp of the power of volume and the primal thrill of three-chord boogie – except this isn't their only mode of attack. *Break Me*'s opening gambit might echo *Kicked In The Teeth*, but there's more to this lot than retreats of *Powerage*'s finest moments.

Obsession slinks and slides with plenty of low-key bluesy menace to complement the strong-arm guitar wailing, flashes of Zeppelin-esque tilt and fury pepper the strutting *Silent Scream*, and closer *Tonight We Die* glows with the spirit of vintage Skynyrd.

The band's understanding of their own musical heritage is wide and profound but at no point results in pastiche. The

songs are strong in their own right and the conviction in their delivery second to none. This is bad-boy boogie and then some.



Essi Berelian

Brothers Osborne

Port Saint Joe SNAKEFARM.

Nashville-based duo serve up hatfuls of rockin' country. John and T.J. Osborne found a niche for themselves with 2016 debut *Pawn Shop*, which married their love of old-school country with the swampy southern rock of The Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd. It quickly found its audience too, the album going gold in the US and cracking the *Billboard* Top 20.

Understandably, the Maryland-reared brothers have refused to fix something that ain't broke, offering up a similar batch of goodness for their follow-up. *Port Saint Joe*, named after the Florida beach town they recorded in, sees them reunite with producer Jay Joyce for songs that ably showcase their whiskey hard-luck tales of romantic despair and boozy solace.

The countrified R&B of *Slow Your Roll* carries echoes of Chris Stapleton, as does *Weed, Whiskey And Willie*. And while they tend to over-rely on Nashville's standard lyrical tropes, the Osbornes excel on harder-rocking tunes like *Shoot*

Me Straight, which morphs into a dazzling showcase for John's guitar mastery.



Rob Hughes

Vega

Only Human FRONTIERS.

80s arena rock reinvented.

Controls set to 'anthem'.



It's been coming. Across four albums, Vega have developed into one of the best rock bands in Britain. And while this has happened mostly under the radar – even after 2014's *Stereo Messiah* featured Def Leppard singer Joe Elliott on a song he'd written, *10 X Bigger Than Love* – Vega have always aimed high.

Theirs is a sound with inbuilt mass appeal. As singer Nick Workman says: "We wear our love of 80s rock on our sleeves, but we also have injected our love of modern rock music to it."

And with *Only Human* comes their strongest album to date. There are anthems – from *Let's Have Fun Tonight*, with its contemporary edge, to the title track, evoking classic Leppard, and *Last Man Standing*, reminiscent of Autograph. And in *Come Back Again* and *Turning Pages*, there's high-class modern AOR. Workman has it bang on: it's like the 80s, only now.



Paul Elliott

ROUND-UP: MELODIC ROCK



By Dave Ling

JK Northrup & David Cagle

That's Gonna Leave A Mark

MELODIC ROCK



With ties to Foreigner, guitarist Northrup has also written songs for King Kobra, Great White and others. Vocal foil David Cagle is less well known, though he does a commendable job of fronting these chorus-friendly, hard-rocking anthems. Meat and potatoes may never be trendy, but they'll always be a wholesome meal.



Heartwind

Higher And Higher AOR HEAVEN



Comprising members of The Poodles, Constancia and Narnia, Heartwind are driven by the vision of guitarist Göran Engvall and keyboard player Mikael Rosengren, united in admiration of Journey, Def Leppard and Whitesnake's big-haired era. There are some decent enough moments here, notably *Ready For The Moonlight*, though sadly they are engulfed by a vibe of overall mediocrity.



The Mood Groove

The Mood Groove ESCAPE MUSIC



Described by producer JK Northrup (yes, him again!) as "musical ear candy for the brain", Mood Groove seek to be

unrestricted by "any particular style or genre, yet to be a part of them all". That means the band dip into funk, psychedelia, blues, soft-rock and even gospel on this album. The resulting collection of tunes crackles and fizzles with fun, yet somewhat inevitably lacks creative focus.



Voices Of Extreme

Mach III Z



Disregard the moniker: Voices Of Extreme don't play heavy metal and have no connection to Gary Cherone. However,

the New York trio deploy a keen funky undercurrent to complement the dynamic, occasionally Zep-flavoured riffing displayed on *Call My Name* and *Foolish Beat*. This engaging debut is recommended for lovers of crunchy melodies and jeans-creaming lead singers.



Shiraz Lane

Carnival Days FRONTIERS



This little corker had the misfortune to emerge during an insane month when everybody and their pet pooch was busy touting a brand new album. Compared to the army of bigger dogs that forced them to slip through the cracks, Shiraz Lane can be considered mere pups right now, though make no mistake, *Carnival Days* earmarks

them as possible future Best In Show champions of Crufts.

Back in 2016 the Finns released a promising full-length debut, *For Crying Out Loud*, that saw critics compare them to Guns N' Roses, Aerosmith and Skid Row, though naturally such references were used with caution. Big question marks were also raised against the vocals of Hannes Kett and his Darkness-flavoured lapses into falsetto.

Two years on, Kett no longer squawks like Hawkins, the band's compositional

skills have improved markedly, and thanks to Swedish producer Per Aldeheim (Def Leppard, Soilwork), *Carnival Days* is blessed with a fuller, superior sound than its predecessor.

The title track boasts a swing and maturity that wasn't present before, while the likes of *Tidal Wave*, *Gotta Be Real* and the fragile *Hope* all pack a new-found believability.

Put simply, the five-piece from Vantaa now have the walk to match the talk.



NEW

CLASSIC ROCK METAL HAMMER PRESENT

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METALLICA



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Wishbone Ash

The Vintage Years 1970-1991 MADFISH

Ash blaze, crash-dive and become yacht-rock captains on monolithic box set.



It took eight quid and an impossible decision to launch Wishbone Ash into the world in late 1969. The money bought the *Melody Maker* advert that attracted guitarists Andy Powell and Ted Turner to audition for bassist Martin Turner and drummer Steve Upton. When they couldn't decide between the two, they went with both, resulting in the twin-guitar front line format that eventually became part of rock's very fabric.

After 1972's career-peak *Argus*, Ash had 20 tortuous years of challenging follow-ups, inter-band friction and changing line-ups, and released 16 albums before splitting in 1991. Powell and Martin Turner might have battled acrimoniously in court for the name in 2013 (Powell won), but for this colossal, 30-CD, career-spanning edifice the original four plus later members all collaborated with annotator Dave Ling in revisiting every one of them.

The *Vintage Years* is the consummate collection, and long-time fans looking for added attractions will salivate over its many out-takes, rarities and bonus live recordings, including eight full desk-quality concerts. Along with Ling's 156-page hardback book, posters (some in a second book) and assorted memorabilia, it's enough to keep Ash devotees enraptured for weeks.

Wishbone Ash had already demoed enough tracks for an album before Richie Blackmore fast-tracked them to MCA in 1970 after they'd impressively supported Deep Purple on tour. Purple producer Derek Lawrence oversaw their self-titled debut, showcasing those twin guitars revving up on *Phoenix*. The demos are here among the extras.

1971's *Pilgrimage* (here with two alternative takes and a studio version of *Where Were You Tomorrow*) emphasised guitars to conceal weak

The original Ash: (l-r): Steve Upton, Andy Powell, Ted Turner, Martin Turner.



vocals, but Ash found prog-minting glory with their 1972 masterpiece *Argus*, with its dramatic peaks of *The King Will Come* concept section. Three-track promo album *Live From Memphis* provides worthy extras.

Ash then adjourned to a Welsh cottage to write, but stalled when tensions flared. Without Lawrence, 1973's *Wishbone Four* sagged (1972 single *No Easy Road* is a bonus). Much livelier are two bonus sets capturing Southampton and Portsmouth shows on the tour that produced the double *Live Dates*. Ted Turner then left, and was replaced by Laurie Wisefield from Home.

'Enough to keep long-time fans enraptured for weeks.'

Recorded with Bill Szymczyk in Miami, *There's The Rub* reinvented Ash as smooth yacht rock, twin guitars softened over harmonised country rock and ballads. Ash had their Top 20 album, and Szymczyk his blueprint for *Hotel California*.

1976's *Locked In*, dismissed as an atrocity ruined by producer Tom Dowd's southern-soul etiquette, was Ash's only album for Atlantic, and here deserving reassessment as a yacht-rocking guilty pleasure. The same year's sparkling *New England* is joined here by the Edinburgh show from the accompanying tour.

Front Page News, again done in Miami, Ash took further steps into Americanisation with laid-back glistening grooves. Again, the sparks are in two bonus live CDs recorded that year.

For *No Smoke Without Fire* ('78) they were back in the UK, but sounding oddly sterile. Maybe tellingly, only three of its songs are on the recording of that tour's Bournemouth show, two on the Tokyo disc.

1980's roots-homaging *Just Testing* welcomed Claire Hammill's backing vocals and contagious energy (extras include out-takes released on 2004's *Lost Pearls*). The bonus Chelmsford show ignored the new album, although two tracks appear on the double set recorded in Bournemouth on the ensuing 10th-anniversary tour.

Martin Turner left after *Live Dates Volume Two*, and for 1981's *Number The Brave* he was replaced by singer-bassist John Wetton, but Ash obviously missed their founder's spirit. With Trevor Bolder having replaced Wetton, Ash displayed their new-found love of ZZ Top on 1982's *Twin Barrels Burning* (here with three buzz-saw out-takes). That was followed by *Raw To The Bone* ('85), an ill-judged stab at metal with squealing singer Mervyn 'Spam' Spence (five bonus demos without him eclipse the album).

Next, Wisefield baled, leaving Ash floundering, until former manager Miles Copeland invited a willing original line-up to join his No Speak instrumental series, resulting in 1987's William Orbit-produced *Nouveau Calls* exhaling balmy 80s mood music. Vocals returned on *Here To Hear's* strapping AOR-jazz fusion collisions, but Steve Upton departed before 1991's *Strange Affair*, which rekindled old sparks.

Despite the ongoing conflicts and those band-acknowledged clinkers, that Wishbone Ash deserve such lavish treatment is now without question. The extra material included on *The Vintage Years 1970-1991* will keep diehards enraptured for weeks, although a contents list would have been handy for what is the last word in ultimate monster box sets.

Kris Needs

Chris Squire

Fish Out Of Water ESOTERIC

Bells-and-whistles box set of late Yes bassist's solo album.



Until his death in 2015, Chris Squire was the only member of

every one of their 21 studio recordings. Little wonder, then, that he found time to make only one truly great album outside the band. *Fish Out Of Water* is it – prog rock with a human touch.

Squire sings brilliantly (like Jon Anderson in places), and utilises the talents of Yes-mates Patrick Moraz and Bill Bruford, saxophonist Mel Collins and guitarist/orchestrator Andrew Pryce Jackson, among others, to deliver a masterpiece that sounds like Yes at their best.

The album was re-released in 2007, but this new reissue is so much more: two CDs, two DVDs (the bonus content of 11 years ago), a 180g vinyl gatefold LP, seven-inch singles of *Lucky Seven* and Squire's *Run With The Fox* Christmas 2007 release, extensive sleeve notes and more. There's also a two-CD version that gathers all the box-set's music: the original mix remastered plus a reboot by King Crimson's Jakko Jaksyk that has brought out many interesting textures, particularly in the 15-minute *Safe (Canon Song)*.

Not only is this the best solo album by any member of Yes – better even than Rick Wakeman's *Six Wives* – it's also the best album Yes didn't make. Just wonderful.

Neil Jeffries

Alberto Y Lost Trios Paranoias

Skite WMM

Mancunian comedy-rock career peak gets 40th anniversary reissue.

Like punky 1970s cousins of the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band, Manchester's Alberto Y Lost Trios Paranoias carved a left-field rock career from finely honed musical parody, absurdist humour and irreverent stage shows. Fronted by future academic and cultural historian Chris 'C.P.' Lee, their manic brand of comedy blurred the line between Pythonesque surrealism and performance art, more akin to bands like Devo or The Residents than to aloof satirists.

The band's third and final album, reissued in expanded form here in a handsome gatefold package, dates back to

1978. It spawned their sole Top 50 hit, *Heads Down No Nonsense* *Mindless Boogie*, a punked-up Status Quo spoof that still raises a smile, partly because of its affectionate tone and musical accuracy. Another single released that year, *Fuck You*, is a spot-on satire of gobby young punks, right down to Lee's needling Lydon-ish warble. The four-letter original features here as a bonus track, alongside the more radio-friendly album edit, comically re-titled *Thank You*. A whimsical doo-wop waltz reworking of *Anarchy In The UK* aims another thin jab at the Pistols and their legacy.

As with *Monty Python*, some of the goofy 1970s humour of the Albertos has dated, but behind the clownish piss-takery, *Skite* confirms that the band had semi-serious rock ambitions. Cementing the Bonzos connection, Roger Ruskin Spear guests on *Peter Parker*, a highly palatable excursion into Syd Barrett-tinged psych-pop, while a dub-reggae cover of Pete Seeger's hippie classic *Where Have All The Flowers Gone?* is more catchy and less arch than it might have been.

Stephen Dalton

Atomic Opera

For Madmen Only ROCK CANDY

Houston, we have no problem.



Parallel to Soundgarden down-tuning their guitars in Seattle, King's X

were doing the same in Houston, (ask Jerry Cantrell or Jeff Ament), spearheading a smaller scene alongside the Galactic Cowboys and Atomic Opera. Although the King's X influence is undeniable in the dropped tunings and shimmering vocal harmonies, Atomic Opera used these elements to forge their own distinct identity, with a more straight-ahead classic rock feel and less dissonance than King's X. The quality of the songwriting on this album could well have made them major players had business hassles not derailed their breakthrough; *Joyride* and *I Know Better* layer guitar jangle over granite-slab riffs, and *All Fall Down* and *War Drum* match sombre Sabbath tones with smouldering vocal lines. If you enjoy the musical stylings of King's X, Black Sabbath and Soundgarden, then this album is for you.

Rich Davenport



Rory Gallagher

Reissues UMC

Rory's entire catalogue gets a marketing boost for what would have been his 70th year.

RORY GALLAGHER
IRISH TOUR '74..

Rory Gallagher's legend has undoubtedly grown since his premature death (aged 47, in 1995) with axemen extraordinaire – May, Marr and Slash among them – testifying to his transformative and influential power.

Gallagher's canon – 15 albums plus two posthumous releases – confirms his status as Ireland's greatest guitar playing poet. However, possibly overshadowed by his exceptional instrumental skills and the impassioned feel of his playing, the specifics of Rory's songwriting craft is often overlooked.

Hot on the heels of his self-titled solo debut (8/10), *Deuce* (9/10), Gallagher's second LP of 1971, is a signature album. The track *I'm Not Awake Yet* presented a new beginning, its modal tuning and spirited edge as sure a place as any to hail the birth of Celtic rock. Where his debut's lovelorn plaints bore fallout from the collapse of Taste – the world-beating band hailed by the likes of Lennon and Hendrix, which crashed and burned in a few meteoric years – tempestuous and tragic events unfolding in his native land now inspired tunes such as *In Your Town*.

The *Deuce* mix of luminous acoustic picking, pop-rock punch and driving heavy blues launched the genre blends that defined 70s classics *Tattoo* (8/10) and *Against The Grain* (8/10).

On the latter the People's Guitarist reigned defiant in the face of punk. Two years later, catching the Pistols' last ever gig in San Francisco, he scrapped sessions to cut the heroic *Photo-Finish* (9/10). His tribute to Rotten and co, *Brute Force And Ignorance*, was matched by *Shin Kicker*, a roaring affirmative salute to Blues legends the Mississippi Sheiks and a biker anthem with an unbeatable, roaring riff.

Gallagher's 80s were fallow, both his perfectionism and fidelity to old forms casting him adrift. Personal phobias and the addictions of road life took a toll as he mined blues lore and hard-boiled fiction to etch a personal identity haunted by demons and dark omens, shown on the suitably intense and haunted *Jinx* (8/10).

It would be five years before Gallagher released another album. Though he never made a bad one, posthumous releases *Notes From San Francisco* (6/10) and *Wheels Within Wheels* (6/10) show he had always released his best material.

Special mention goes to in-concert sets *Irish Tour 74* (10/10) and *Live In Europe* (9/10). Both capture a truly captivating, uplifting and unifying force for the ages.

It's wistful to think, had bad medicine not taken its toll early, what might have been. But, with Rory Gallagher, what was will always be mighty fine enough.

Gavin Martin

Royal Trux

Reissues FAT POSSUM

Rock'n'roll scuzzbags stream three of their best.



It's 18 years since former husband and wife team Neil Michael

Hagerty and Jennifer Herrema released an album, but the pair are due to return in 2019 with their first new material since 2000's *Pound For Pound*. In the meantime, some of their best records are hitting streaming platforms for the first time.

Weird and wired, volatile, cool, wasted and grimy, and existing in their own malodorous vacuum, Royal Trux turned garage rock on its head, their disjointed creations challenging the listener at every turn. *Cats And Dogs* (7/10) from 1993, though, was a step up from the aural chaos of their earliest work, allowing the songs beneath the bluster to poke their heads above the dirt and flourish, the pair's artfully bored vocals tethering Hagerty's vicious soloing.

Accelerator (8/10) takes them back to the lo-fi, much to the dismay of Virgin, their major label at the time. Its grubby, 4am tequila-shot vibes wheel from stomping self-assurance to buzzing, spun-out silliness on *The Banana Question* and *Juicy Juicy Juice*, to maudlin, rickety introversion on *Yellow Kid*, and put together it forms an insular little world lived in the twilight.

It was a tough act for 1999's *Veterans Of Disorder* (7/10) to follow, but coming out all guns blazing with the rollicking, hooky *Waterpark*, a groove-ridden, trashy paean to summer thrills, sets them up for their next move on an album wildly in lust with an over-the-shoulder view of the Stones in their 70s pomp.

No amount of bleach will remove the ingrained grime you'll find here, but frankly, why would you want it to?

Emma Johnston

Raven

Wiped Out DISSONANCE

Marshall law still holds sway.



While it sometimes feels necessary for the dutiful rock journalist

to explain the context of the music they're writing about, there's no need whatsoever in this instance. *Wiped Out* exploded onto the NWOBHM scene in 1982 and basically killed

everybody dead forever, and it's 12-ton, 700mph supersonic powers haven't diminished one iota since then.

Hot on the heels of their frantic *Rock Until You Drop*, *Wiped Out* was Raven's crowning achievement, ground zero for the speed-metal wave that ensued a year later, and one of the best rock'n'roll albums of the entire decade. Anchored by the sledgehammer-on-anvils pounding of Rob 'Wacko' Hunter, the original Brothers Gallagher blowtorch their way through triple-speed bangers like *To The Limit/To The Top*, *Chainsaw* and *Firepower* with screeching vocals, screaming guitars and no sense of public safety whatsoever.

While their legacy is somewhat tarnished by the jaw-dropping missteps of their major label albums a few years later, there's no denying the influence Raven had on the fast and furious world of heavy metal, and they're at the top of their game here. The reissue also includes the '82 companion piece EP *Crash Bang Wallop*. All of it will melt your face off.



Sleazegrinder

Venom

The Singles

DISSONANCE/NO SURVIVORS

Were they evil? Yes they were.



Venom: *The Singles* is an unlikely title for an album; almost as

unlikely, in fact, as Roger Whittaker: *The Metal Years* ("An unbelievably intense whistling experience" – *The Guardian*). But as connoisseurs of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal will know, the genre was built on the existence of the humble ol' seven-inch short-player.

Venom's label, Neat Records, was the leader of the 45rpm pack, releasing classic after classic from the likes of Raven, Fist, Blitzkrieg et al. However, when Neat lackey Conrad Lant tried to persuade boss David Wood to offer his band, Venom, some time in the studio, Wood was naturally reluctant due the unlistenability of Venom's so-called music. But he eventually relented and the rest is horrible history.

Lant (aka bassist/vocalist Cronos) and his cohorts, guitarist Mantas and drummer Abaddon, unwittingly invented the genres we now know as black metal and death metal with their sordid debut single *In*

League With Satan. And the trio became more seethingly evil with each subsequent release: *Bloodlust*, *Die Hard*, *Warhead* and *Manitou*. This collects all of the above, plus B-sides, in a chunky box with the original sleeves and everything. A demonic delight and no mistake.



Geoff Barton

Various

Brown Acid: The Sixth Trip RIDING EASY

Fuzz-rock archivists deliver another dose of lysergic thrills.



'I need a good woman to wash my clothes and keep me warm at night,' growls Vic Bleckman, singer of Flight in Lovin', Huggin' & More, summing up the neolithic appeal of the much loved Brown Acid series.

Dedicated to unearthing obscure cuts from the period between (essentially) 1968 and 1975, this sixth instalment sees no dilution in quality.

Pinballing from pulverising proto-metal (Gold's No Parking) to Doors-style blues (Purgatory's Polar Expedition) to paranoid freakbeat (Zendik's Is There No Peace), it's proof that

in the post-Nuggets era, the US rock underground was freaked out in every respect.

Torn between Timothy Leary's 'turn on, tune in, drop out' ideology and fear of the Vietnam draft, for these bands – none of whom made more than a handful of singles – the only option was to turn up the amps and put their primal fears on tape.

A blistering bad trip from start to finish.



Paul Moody

Sky

The Studio Albums 1979-1987 ESOTERIC

A classical gas – but not for the po-faced critics.



A prodigiously talented ensemble formed around renowned classical guitarist John Williams, Sky looked to build on his crossover success with *Cavatina* (the *Deer Hunter* theme). Ace session musicians Herbie Flowers (who'd provided the bassline for Lou Reed's *Walk On The Wild Side*) and percussionist Tristan Fry signed up, along with classically trained Curved Air keyboard player Francis

Monkman and a second Australian guitarist, Kevin Peek.

Sky's first two albums fulfilled the brief, with knobs on. Mainly featuring original material (including two 20-minute pieces by Monkman), they frequently rearranged classical styles and revelled in their combined prowess. Both albums went platinum and the band even appeared on *Top Of The Pops* with their rocked-up *Toccata*. But serious music critics were haughtily dismissive, branding them classical-lite.

After Monkman left (amicably), his replacement Steve Gray took them in a jazzier direction for Sky 3, which was no problem musically, but subsequent albums had separate identities. Sky 4: *Forthcoming* (the first to get a proper title) consisted solely of classical transcriptions, some of which were too clever for their own good. There was a better balance of originals and classical covers on sixth album *Cadmium*, but after Williams returned to his day job (as he'd always planned), much of the momentum was lost.

There's no booklet in this set, and no information beyond the covers of their seven albums,

while the double Sky 2 has been edited to get it onto a single CD. But you do get a bonus DVD of a 1990 live show.



Hugh Felder

The Stranglers

The Classic Collection

RHINO

Reissued – again? Why the hell not!



This time, the 'classic' first seven Stranglers albums each come with several bonus tracks (B-sides, live takes, 12-inch versions) and extended booklets. The image of the band – boorish boozers from Guildford with a mean line in humour and an archaic view of gender relations – might not have fared well with time, but the power of much of this music is undeniable. That voice! Those bass runs!

How much of this do you need? How much of a fan are you? The first album, 1977's blistering *Rattus Norvegicus* (9/10) – a brawling reinterpretation of The Doors for the No Future generation – is about as great and misogynistic as punk ever got. More lowlife

than Dickens, it's matched only in misanthropic zeal by its follow-up the same year, *No More Heroes* (8/10), with its monster title track and disgraceful opener *I Feel Like A Wog*. Some argued it was dark satire... 1978's *Black And White* (8/10) was fucking brutal too, and the full-on reinvention of Dionne Warwick's *Walk On By* was a masterpiece.

Elsewhere, they tailed off a little. *Live (X Cert)* (8/10), recorded live at the Roundhouse and Battersea Park in '77 and '78 captures the rancour and sleaze brilliantly. *The Raven* (6/10) – despite spawning the ace *Duchess* – felt too prog for 1979. (Vikings? Nuclear devices? Meninblack? Really?)

1981 brought forth two more albums: the cumbrously titled *The Gospel According To Themeninblack* (4/10), a concept album based around alien visitors, which failed to spawn a hit single; and *La Folie* (5/10), an attempt to claw back lost commercial ground. It had little to recommend it, despite boasting the band's biggest hit, *Golden Brown*.

Not the sort of band you want to meet down a dark alley. Everett True

New York Dolls

Personality Crisis: Live Recordings & Studio Demos 1972-1975 CHERRY RED

Another time around for the band's well-travelled demos and classic live sets.

The late Marty Thau, who bravely took on the unenviable task of managing the New York Dolls until they started disintegrating in 1974, was a smart cookie when manoeuvring the music business. Before his 2014 death, he had amassed the band's live and demo catalogue, outside of the two official albums forever numbered as failing to capture the Dolls' fabled live onslaught, despite their colossal importance to this and many other lonely planet boys at the time.

The Dolls recorded three demo sessions: two in 1972 with late drummer Billy Murcia at New York's Blue Rock and the UK's Escape studios, then March 1973's epic 22-track Planet session after Jerry Nolan replaced Murcia and noticeably elevated the band's latent live rampage. All have been endlessly recycled since the Blue Rock session appeared on ROIR cassette in 1981, the Escape tapes as a 1982 EP and nineteen Planet tracks on Receiver's 1992 *Seven Day Weekend*.

After Thau licensed the latter to New York's Norton Records for 2000's *A Hard*

Night's Day and live sets elsewhere, he sold his archive to Universal-owned Sanctuary/Castle, first producing 2002's *Great Big Kiss* studio/live collection; then 2006's live motherlode *From Here to Eternity: The Live Bootleg Boxset*, corraling recordings of key shows in Paris, Vancouver, Detroit and Long Island, and 1975's *Red Patent Leather* set (some bootleg, others radio broadcast quality).

Soon after, Universal sold Sanctuary to BMG. While that didn't stop Easy Action lavishly repackaging April 1974's *My Father's Place* radio broadcast in 2015, Cherry Red's BMG-licensed set remasters everything over five CDs. Intrepid diehards will find nothing new, but it's nice having it all in one handsome box, even if it's slightly diminished by workmanlike notes. As a long-time Dolls chronicler blown apart at Biba's in December 1973, it stands as a worthy stab at bottling



the magic frustratingly sabotaged by clueless producers when the Dolls glimpsed the big time.

Live was another matter. On their night, the Dolls cooked with a white-hot street-punk energy that nobody has got near since, their soul covers astutely obscure, with David Johansen one of rock's great showmen. Newcomers can do a lot worse than start right here.



Kris Needs



Metallica

The \$5.98 EP: Garage Days Re-Revisited

BLACKENED

Metal icons revisit watershed covers EP. Again.

Cliff Burton's death in September 1986 didn't just mark the end of Metallica's first chapter, it also changed something fundamental in the band's DNA. Understandable, given the bassist's uniquely off-kilter personality. But the bus accident that took his life also stripped Metallica of the feral abandon that fuelled their first three iconic albums.

Like AC/DC before them, Metallica dealt with their grief by throwing themselves into their work. Within six weeks they were back on the road with replacement Jason Newsted. Less than a year later, they released *The \$5.98 EP*, a set of wilfully unvarnished NWOBHM and punk rock covers that acted as both a healing exercise and a farewell to the band they were.

The EP's title was a nod to their underground roots. Incorporating the price in the name ensured that unscrupulous dealers couldn't fleece unwitting fans – a howling irony now, given that this reissue ties in with Record Store Day, an event that has become a cynical cash grab designed to do just that.

But it was the 'Garage Days' subtitle that laid out Metallica's intentions. The songs they covered – Diamond Head's *Helpless*, Holocaust's *The Small Hours*, Budgie's *Crash Course In Brain Surgery*,

a medley of the Misfits' *Last Caress* and *Green Hell*, plus a version of Killing Joke's *The Wait* that was absent from the original 1987 UK release but has been reinstated here – weren't chosen to show off how cool Lars Ulrich and James Hetfield were. They were picked because the band had grown up listening to them at full volume, sewing patches with the name of the bands on to their denim jackets while they were doing it.

Thirty years on, its energy and sheer will to live remains infectious. The NWOBHM updates are respectful but not reverent, and just the right side of ramshackle. But their iconic, 200mph race through *Last Caress/Green Hell*, with its cheerfully feral opening howl of 'I've got something to say... I killed your baby today!' ramps up the gleeful viciousness until the needle's off the dial, elevating the Misfits from punk obscuros to semi-household names in the process.

It gave them a bona fide Top 30 hit on both sides of the Atlantic, but Metallica were changing. Their next release was the complex, grown-up, mannered... *And Justice For All*. The \$5.98 EP was a kiss-off to wild youth and alcohol-fueled innocence. As far as goodbyes go, they don't come any better.

★★★★★

Dave Everley



The Undertones

Singles Box Set BMG

13 seven-inch slices of perfection, boxed.



This is it. The pinnacle. There is no "better". Anyone who tells you

different is a fully registered flat-out shit-faced liar. Other bands dealing in loud guitars and pop music had their moments: Buzzcocks' incredible run of pre-1981 albums and singles, Ramones being Ramones, [fill in your own]. The Saints, of course.

But these five unlikely Ramones-loving lads from Derry with a dissolute choirboy on vocals top them all. Every single track featured here in this box set – every single track, mind you, including B-sides, throwaway live outtakes, whistles and all – is solid gold, a pure diamond classic.

The mournful *Julie Ocean*? Check. The cheeky Subbuteo-referencing, jealousy-infused *My Perfect Cousin*? Check. These songs of glee and adolescent male excitement often had dark, uh, undertones. Check out *Emergency Cases* on the debut *Teenage Kicks* EP.

The cheeky live version of *Family Entertainment* on the flip side of the underrated deep soul throb of *The Love Parade*? Check. The brilliantly pushy *You've Got My Number* (*Why Don't You Use It!*) and even cheekier *I Told You So* (B-side of the so-beautiful *Wednesday Week*)? Check.

No wonder the band split up, disillusioned, when their magnificent fourth album *The Sin Of Pride* entirely failed to dent the Top 40 in 1983. Fancy releasing something as incredible as that, and it transpires that all anyone ever wanted was five acne-faced 16-year-olds from Derry singing songs about doomed teenage infatuation.

For shame, great British public, for shame!

★★★★★

Everett True

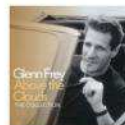
Glenn Frey

Above The Clouds:

The Collection GEFEN/USM

His work outside the Eagles.

The hits and the misses.



Among the tributes that followed the death of Glenn Frey in 2016,

the most poignant came from Don Henley, the other leading figure in the Eagles, who credited

Frey as the real power behind one of America's greatest bands. "Glenn started it all," Henley said. "He was the man with the plan."

This new box set of three CDs and a DVD contains music that Frey made without the Eagles. The best of it comes on the first disc, with the hits he had as a solo artist. Henley's solo work was better, with songs such as *The Boys Of Summer* and *The End Of The Innocence* comparable to the Eagles' classics. But Frey's hits were a part of the fabric of 80s pop culture.

The Heat Is On, with honking sax, was the big number in *Beverly Hills Cop*, and two others featured in *Miami Vice*: *You Belong To The City*, a moody ballad; and *Smuggler's Blues*, with stinging slide guitar, a study of the drug trade from one of its best-paying customers.

The second disc has lesser-known solo tracks, some good and some bad – notably a pointless cover of *Route 66*.

The third has, for the first time on CD, the sole album by Longbranch Pennywhistle, Frey's late-60s double-act with future Eagles collaborator JD Souther. As an early example of country rock, it has historical value. And the DVD has a solo gig from Dublin in 1992, which ends with *Desperado* – the first of the many great songs that Frey and Henley wrote together.

★★★★★

Paul Elliott

Roger McGuinn

Peace On You RETROWORLD

Byrd's second solo album.

Includes Turtles.



If any Byrd seemed destined for solo success, it was Roger

McGuinn. Yet for all its ambition, his muddled, self-titled 1973 debut was an artistic and commercial disappointment.

A year later, *Peace On You* showed him still uncertain whether to continue The Byrds' jingle-jangle legacy or take things a spacey step further. In the end, he hedged his bets and settled on a sometimes elegiac, sometimes anaemic blend of country rock and West Coast singer-songwriting.

His vocals, though, could have been culled from *Younger Than Yesterday* and they're supremely affecting on *Gate Of Horn*, which, like all the McGuinn-penned material bar *Rock And Roll Time*, was written with Jacques Levy,

whom McGuinn would soon introduce to Bob Dylan.

Elsewhere, Dan Fogelberg, Al Kooper, plus Turtles Mark Volman and a misspelled Howard Kaylan appear, but there's a sense that the guests were holding back their best efforts for their own careers.



John Aizlewood

The Mission

For Ever More: Live At London Shepherd's Bush Empire

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.



By 2008, the Mission line-up responsible for the *God Is*

A *Bullet* album

had pretty much run its course, but going quietly wasn't an option. Instead, they bid farewell with four sold-out nights at the Shepherd's Bush Empire: the first dedicated to the early EPs, the remaining three to each of their first three albums.

All four nights sprawl here across five discs. Like *The Mission* themselves, it's a ludicrously overblown set, but therein lies its charm, and this is a treasure trove of deep-voiced, guitar-driven but surprisingly

spring-heeled goth. Wayne Hussey is a genial host, unafraid to admit: "Every album's got one or two tracks where you think, 'What were we thinking about?'"

But he was always a master of a wallop chorus, a dab hand with a cover version (their *Like A Hurricane* wheezes in superior fashion) and a gloriously daft lyric, always delivered with an admirably straight face.



John Aizlewood

Various

Goldfish: 10 Years Of Fruits De Mer Records

FRUITS DE MER

Three-disc celebration of cult psych label's first decade.



Back when Temples were still in short trousers, Fruits De Mer were

exploring the murkier depths of psychedelia, causing palpitations among obsessives with limited-edition vinyl releases of obscure tracks by the likes of HP Lovecraft, Arthur Brown and Brainticket.

This typically idiosyncratic three-LP set – complete with triple-gatefold sleeve – is a suitably indulgent celebration

of their journey to date.

Packed with perfectly pitched covers – notably The Honey Pot's rendition of The Orange Machine's 1969 classic *Dr Crippen's Waiting Room* and Sidewalk Society's version of The Action's *Strange Roads* – it's also home to some suitably strange originals. One of the best is Tír Na nÓg's *I Pick Up Birds At Funerals*, a song about doing exactly that.



Paul Moody

Brian James

Brian James EASY ACTION

Damned legend braves the wilderness of 1990.



In the murky twilight of the 80s, shortly after goth-glam post-punks

Lords Of The New Church fizzled out, Lords/Damned/lggy Pop guitar hero Brian James hunkered down in Brussels and bashed out a solo album. Nobody noticed at the time, which is why it's just been reissued in a deluxe new vinyl edition.

James's vocals are pretty weak in spots – his lightweight Thunders warble is especially

woeful on his cover of Eddie Cochran's classic *Cut Across Shorty*. But his guitar is absolutely blazing, especially on *Another Time, Another Crime*, a slithery, sleazy rocker that deserves its rightful place in dive-bar jukeboxes everywhere, and on the snarly, fist-fighting opener *The Twist*.

While not exactly a cult classic, it belatedly scratches that mid-80s punks-gone-glam itch, the same sorta leopard-spots and brothel-creepers vibe once mined by Hanoi Rocks, Johnny Thunders, The Babysitters, and every other cool kid vamping around in 1984.



Sleazegrinder

Pete Townshend

Who Came First

UNIVERSAL MUSIC

Expanded version of The Who guitarist's solo back catalogue.



After two limited-edition albums in support of his spiritual master

Meher Baba, Townshend made 1972's *Who Came First* for his full commercial release. Like The Who's then-recent *Meaty Beaty Big And Bouncy*, it was

a compilation – though of solo demos for the aborted band *Lifeforce* project (notably *Pure & Easy* and *Let's See Action*) and four Meher Baba album tracks (the strongest being *Parvagar*).

This two-CD version adds 17 tracks, which, as Townshend suggests in over 3,000 words of notes that are a brilliant mixture of world-weary reflections and self-deprecating therapy, "seem relevant". This means anything that reflects his links to Meher Baba – a connection which he reveals was being "strongly revived" at the time of this new compilation.

The bonus disc both revisits the two Meher Baba albums that preceded *Who Came First*, and includes songs from 1976's third and final one – such as the mandolin-led instrumental *His Hands* and *Sleeping Dog*.

Townshend has also diligently included some "collectors items" – new edits, early versions and a live *Evolution* from the Ronnie Lane Memorial Concert in 2004. Plus the full instrumental demo for *Baba O'Riley*.

Overall it's not his best solo work, but even a patchy Townshend still entertains.



Neil Jeffries



Cockney Rebel

Reissues CHRYSALIS

Bowie-matching pair of stone-cold classics from a revved-up Harley and co.

If you were an avid reader of the weekly music press in the early 1970s, you were acutely aware of the name Steve Harley. The busker turned Cockney Rebel frontman went out of his way to upset and intimidate hacks who worked for *Melody Maker*, *NME* and *Sounds*, and then stood back to enjoy the fallout.

Harley had been a journo himself so he knew the tricks of the trade. Plus he was self-assured and intelligent – qualities that said hacks, used to running rings around the slow-witted rockers of the 60s, struggled to come to terms with. Harley's self-promotion paid off and his profile was heightened dramatically. He no doubt allowed himself a sly, triumphant chuckle when his band was dubbed 'Cocky Rabble'.

With the famous trio of inkies now consigned to the graveyard, one wonders how Harley's tactics would fare today. Pissing off a YouTube vlogger with 3,457 followers would likely be ineffectual as a career-enhancing exercise.

But let there be no doubt, Cockney Rebel's debut album *The Human Menagerie* (9/10), released in November 1973, proved that Harley

had the musical chops to back up his posturing. If, like this writer, you were slightly too late for the David Bowie bandwagon, and you thought Jobriath was too weird for words, then *Menagerie* will have a special place in your heart. To these ears it's a glitter-flecked, art-glam classic, every bit as good as, say, Bowie's *Hunky Dory*: a bold claim that will likely cause po-faced rock historians to fulminate into musty old copies of *ZigZag*.

The album pivots on two epic songs: *Sebastian* and *Death Trip*. Highly orchestrated with vast chorals – for the former, imagine hints of *Bo Rhapsody* mixed with a generous portion of Russian yodelling – they are, to put it bluntly, as soul-searing as a death in the family.

These awe-inspiring centrepieces are counterbalanced by a slew of simpler songs – *Hideaway*, *Crazy Raver*, *Mirror Freak* (about pal Marc Bolan) – where Harley simply rollicks in his role of belligerent troubadour. There's also a cast of mysterious women – Ruthy, Loretta,



Muriel – that lends an ambience of decadence and eroticism, as evinced by Harley's lyrical request: 'Love me sublime, mangle my mind.'

Follow-up *The Psychomodo* (8/10) was Cockney Rebel's breakthrough album, charting at No.8 and containing hit single *Mr Soft*. Penultimate track *Sling It!* gave a hint of things to come, a petulant Harley resisting demands from the other Cockney Rebel musicians for a smidgen of time in the spotlight. Taking a leaf out of Ziggy's book, he broke up the band.

Geoff Barton



Pat Benatar

One of the most successful solo female rock artists of the 80s, she became a superstar by doing things her way or no way.

It was that extraordinary voice, on classic hit singles from the 80s – *Hit Me With Your Best Shot*, *Shadows Of The Night*, *Love Is A Battlefield*, *We Belong* – that made her a superstar. But there is another quality to Pat Benatar that has had a powerful influence on her career – call it self-belief, independence or a simple, no-bullshit attitude. All that she has achieved (including those hits, seven US platinum-or-better albums, four Grammys), she has done so on her own terms, whatever the consequences.

As a female rock star in an arena at the time dominated by men and rife with chauvinism, Benatar refused to be marketed as a sex object – she claimed that she once “whacked” the CEO of her record label over a sexist comment he made. After people warned her not to get involved romantically with her guitarist, Neil Giraldo – because intra-band relationships always end in tears/disaster – she ended up marrying him. More than 35 years later they’re still together. When, after a string of million-selling albums, she decided to change tack and make what she called “artsy music” – another slap in the face to that CEO – she ended up with another huge hit. And when she had children, she put her family before her career.

Born Patricia Mae Andrzejewski on January 10, 1953 in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York, she trained in musical theatre and opera and worked as a cabaret singer before finding her true vocation in rock’n’roll. At 19 she married her high-school sweetheart Dennis Benatar, and kept his name after their divorce in 1979.

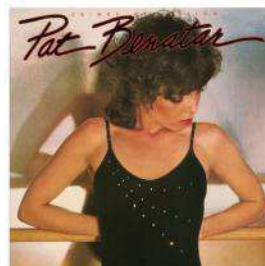
A pivotal moment came in 1977 when she performed at a Halloween show in New York City, singing rock songs and wearing a spandex cat suit. “Something remarkable happened that night,” she recalled. “I became really aggressive. I’m really a nice girl, but this other person exists, and when she came out I never looked back.”

After signing to Chrysalis, she found the perfect foil in Giraldo, whom she described as the Jimmy Page to her Robert Plant. On all her big albums of the 80s, through to the lesser-known records of recent years, Giraldo has been her chief collaborator. And they’re not done yet. In 2017, Benatar spoke of a new album in progress, her first since 2003. “We’re touring so much,” she said. “But we just told management: ‘That’s it! We’re going to stay home and record these songs.’”

After all these years, Pat Benatar is still doing it her way.

Paul Elliott

Essential Classics



Crimes Of Passion

CHRYSLIS, 1980

Benatar’s second album was the game changer, hitting No.2 in the US and transforming her into a major-league star. Her biggest seller, having sold four million, *Crimes Of Passion* is also the definitive Pat Benatar album.

Punchy hard rocker *Hit Me With Your Best Shot*, written by Canadian singer Eddie Schwartz, was a huge hit and became her signature song. And while her take on Kate Bush’s *Wuthering Heights* bordered on karaoke, genuine artistic depth was evident in *Hell Is For Children*, a powerful song addressing child abuse, co-written by Benatar and sung with raw emotion. “I wanted it to be scathing,” she said.



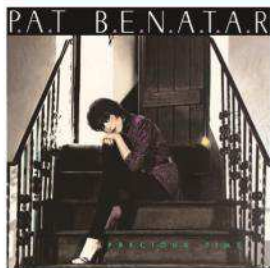
Live From Earth

CHRYSLIS, 1983

It was a new studio track, *Love Is A Battlefield*, on this live album that became Benatar’s second million-selling single and the most famous song of her career. Originally written as a ballad by Holly Knight and Mike Chapman, it was reworked by Neil Giraldo into an uptempo AOR classic on which Benatar dug deep to deliver arguably her greatest vocal performance.

On the simplest level, this is a fine live album, with all her early hits belted out to general rowdiness. But with *Love Is A Battlefield* she was reaching for something more sophisticated. *Live From Earth* was the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

Superior Reputation cementing

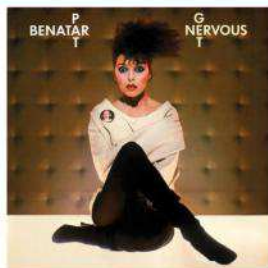


Precious Time

CHRYSLIS, 1981

In January 1981, Benatar's album *Crimes Of Passion* peaked at No.2 in America, with John Lennon and Yoko Ono's *Double Fantasy* remaining at No.1 in the wake of Lennon's death. Later that year, *Precious Time* gave Benatar her first No.1 album, and it included a tribute to Lennon in a raucous version of The Beatles' most infamous song, *Helter Skelter*.

It's an assured album from an artist at the top of her game, and it includes two of the best songs she ever recorded: *Promises In The Dark*, a blazing rock anthem with an epic sense of drama; and *Fire And Ice*, sleek and gritty, with shades of Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers.



Get Nervous

CHRYSLIS, 1982

With the cover of her fourth album, Benatar sent out a clear message. With her in a straitjacket, with startled eyes and wild hair, it signalled the end of her days as rock's pin-up girl. "I wasn't looking beautiful," she said. "I was looking crazy."

There was also a change in her music. *Shadows Of The Night* was classic Benatar, *Fight It Out* an emotionally charged ballad, but there was new-wave-influenced weirdness in *Looking For A Stranger* and the sort-of title track *Anxiety* (*Get Nervous*). And in *The Victim* she really let it all out. With Giraldo driving her band at full throttle as she ranted and raved, it's her heaviest song.



Tropico

CHRYSLIS, 1984

There was alarm among Chrysalis execs when Benatar told them she was making an album that was, in her words, "artsy and eclectic". But that was exactly how it played out on *Tropico*. And it ended up being another million seller.

Emboldened by the success of *Love Is A Battlefield*, she shifted further from hard rock to create a slick, big-production album on which AOR was combined with an art-rock sensibility.

This radical reinvention yielded mixed results, but in two songs she reached a new artistic peak: *Painted Desert*, a subtle mood piece, and *We Belong*, a hit single as inventive as it was beautiful.



Seven The Hard Way

CHRYSLIS, 1985

Benatar's seventh album is not one she has much fondness for. Going into it, she and Giraldo were burnt out by years on the touring/recording treadmill. "That," she said, "is why it was called *Seven The Hard Way*."

Despite being her first album not to go platinum, it is one of her very best, with power and edginess in *Sex Is A Weapon*, beauty in *La Bel Age*, and AOR perfection in the euphoric do-or-die anthem *Invincible*. Holly Knight, co-writer of *Love Is A Battlefield*, wrote *Invincible* with Simon Climie of Clime Fisher fame. And, as before, Benatar knocked it out of the park.

Good Worth exploring



In The Heat Of The Night

CHRYSLIS, 1979

On this, her debut album, it was *Heartbreaker* that set the tone for Benatar's early career and gave her her first hit. Over an urgent riff, she sang it like she meant it.

Heartbreaker was one of many covers on the album. *I Need A Lover* was by the then unknown Johnny Cougar (later John Mellencamp), while Mike Chapman provided songs he'd co-written and produced for soft rockers Smokie and glam titans The Sweet.

Benatar co-wrote two songs, including the bizarre sci-fi tale *My Clone Sleeps Alone*. More significant was the first song Giraldo wrote for her, *We Live For Love*, which rocks, but gently.



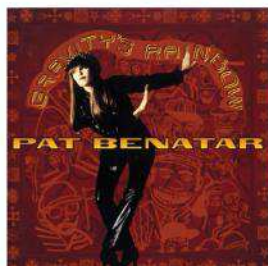
Wide Awake In Dreamland

CHRYSLIS, 1988

The end of the 80s was for Benatar the end of an era. *All Fired Up*, the hit single from *Wide Awake In Dreamland*, was her last to make the US Top 20.

On this album there were echoes of past glories in the full-blooded hard rock of *All Fired Up*, and also *Suffer The Little Children*, a sequel to *Hell Is For Children*. Best of all was the title track, funky in a gnarly kind of way, with that voice as powerful as it always was.

But on the following album, 1991's *True Love*, she retreated even further into her past, singing old blues and R&B songs. You can take the girl out of the clubs...



Gravity's Rainbow

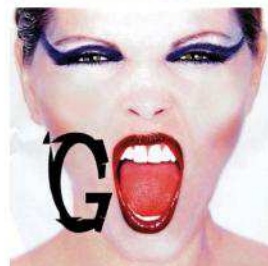
CHRYSLIS, 1993

Two years after her covers album *True Love*, Benatar returned to rock with *Gravity's Rainbow*. It was not a hit (in the US it peaked at No.85), but it remains the best album she has made since her golden days in the 80s.

The voice was unmistakable, but she had a different sound - rootsy, heartland rock in the style of John Mellencamp, partly the result of having Neil Giraldo co-producing with Don Gehman, who worked on all of Mellencamp's best records.

There are great songs on this album - *Somebody's Baby*, *You And I*, *Kingdom Key*, *Every Time I Fall Back* - but this is Pat Benatar as few have heard her.

Avoid



Go

BEL CHIASO, 2003

On all of her best albums, Benatar always had her own style - for example, the hard rock of *Crimes Of Passion* or the artsy AOR of *Tropico*. But she didn't on *Go*, her last album to date, on which she affected a bad impersonation of Alanis Morissette.

For a singer of such individuality, the sub-Alanis posturing on its noisy title track reeked of desperation. And on the songs where she took a softer approach, such as *Brave*, she sounded like Natalie Imbruglia, only more vanilla.

A lousy album, it ended on a fittingly bum note with the festive *Christmas In America*. Fifteen years on, it's time she made amends.

Essential Playlist

Heartbreaker

In The Heat Of The Night

We Live For Love

In The Heat Of The Night

Hit Me With Your Best Shot

Crimes Of Passion

Hell Is For Children

Crimes Of Passion

Treat Me Right

Crimes Of Passion

Promises In The Dark

Precious Time

Fire And Ice

Precious Time

Shadows Of The Night

Get Nervous

Anxiety (Get Nervous)

Get Nervous

Love Is A Battlefield

Live From Earth

Looking For A Stranger

Live From Earth

We Belong

Tropico

Painted Desert

Tropico

Invincible

Seven The Hard Way

Sex Is A Weapon

Seven The Hard Way

Wide Awake In Dreamland

Wide Awake In Dreamland

Somebody's Baby

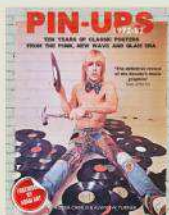
Gravity's Rainbow



Pin-Ups 1972-82: Ten Years Of Classic Posters From The Punk, New Wave And Glam Era

Alwyn Turner and Roger Crimlis CADIZ MUSIC LTD

The golden age of rolled-up rock'n'roll marketing.



If you're in your late 50s and you're reading this magazine, unless you're in a dentist's waiting room and so short-sighted that you thought you'd picked up *Take A Break*, then you're going to want to own this exceptional book. It's basically a bound compilation of all the posters that your livid mother tore from your wall and threw away directly after kicking your sorry arse out of the familial home for doing whatever it was that you did.

It's also the sort of thing you can splay atop a coffee table (rather than secrete like a guilty secret behind your *H&Es* and *ELP LPs* for fear of public humiliation), because co-curators Turner and Crimlis have included only the good stuff. So it'll confer cool. You'll be able to swagger about your lounge with an unspoken 'I might look like this now, but as a teenager I was basically *All The Young Dudes* in a tank-top' spring in your stride.

Visually, it's only a joy. Promo shots, gig posters, centre-page pin-ups from *Disc*, *Sounds*, *Popswop*, *Record Mirror*, advertising material, those iconic Pace portraits you'd buy ready rolled in Woolworth's. From bog-basic exploitation material that made megastar objects of lust of homely fellows like Slade, The Sweet and Glitter, to the self-consciously artier end of

punk rock (Linder Sterling's Buzzcocks collages, Sex Pistols' designer Jamie Reid's iconic collection of crassly sensational, repurposed '68 situationism). *Pin-Ups'* always fascinating accompanying text supplies a reliable, and academically-serious-without-being-overly-dry, combined history of glam and punk. Throwing into sharp focus how irrevocably linked the two scenes were, with wide-eyed teeny-bopping fans of the former entering adulthood as protagonists and acolytes of the latter, it's tightly packed with informed insight. But it's the titular pin-ups themselves that win the day.

Unless you passed the decade in the bare cell of a monastery, so many of the artefacts so decorously displayed herein – and illuminatingly annotated by extended captions – will be incredibly familiar from your 70s salad days. Some you may have forgotten entirely, one may even be your Rosebud – an essential emblematic element of halcyon youth believed lost forever. For me, glimpsing *Disc's* Portrait Gallery Series poster of Eno for the first time since February '74 (when I had it confiscated during maths) was a moment accompanied by choirs of angels.

■■■■■■■■■■
Ian Fortnam

27: Gone Too Soon – Casualties Of Rock And Roll

Simon Napier Bell ????????

Bell roots through the fatal flaws of the '27 Club'.



Star has fucked-up childhood. Star uses childhood trauma to become international

superstar. Star gets indulged by label/hangers-on, takes heroin, goes heels-up way too young. Such is the pattern identified by Simon Napier-Bell's documentary on the so-called 27 Club – Brian Jones, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Kurt Cobain, Amy Winehouse, all of whom kicked the bucket at the fated age of 27.

Pundits ranging from the informed and insightful (Chris Salewicz) to the random and WTF (the bloke from The Feeling) race to the deaths of artists who warrant rounded rockumentaries all their own, but these potted tragedies do throw up fascinating insights into the roots of their various fatal flaws: Morrison's military upbringing, or Joplin's civil rights activism.

It flounders a little on the crux of the matter – why 27? – but amid fluffy revelations about how young rock stars like to drink, have sex and take drugs (thanks for that), salient points are made. Hard drugs hit 60s counterculture just in time to rob the fledgling scene of some stars at their peak; from there the mythology of living fast and dying before Saturn returns was set, and Cobain and Winehouse were recruited to the club by chance. With no honorary mention of the Manics' Richey Edwards, missing at 27, 27: *Gone Too Soon* is incomplete but morbidly intriguing viewing.

■■■■■■■■■■
Mark Beaumont

Anthrax Kings Among Scotland

NUCLEAR BLAST

Thrash lifers give classic LP a birthday dust-down.



Anthrax were probably counting down the seconds until their 1987

album *Among The Living* turned 30 so they could legitimately play it live in full from start to finish. Fair enough, that record was the fourth great pillar of thrash, alongside *Master Of Puppets*, *Reign In Blood* and *Peace*

Sells... But Who's Buying. Sadly, this perfunctory DVD, recorded at Glasgow's iconic Barrowland, doesn't do it justice.

There's nothing wrong with songs such as *I Am The Law* and *Skeletons In The Closet*, or the set of non-ATL songs that precedes them. But Anthrax have never had Metallica's millions, and the show, the film and the accompanying on-the-road documentary lack the blockbusting ka-boom! their more famous Big Four members deliver. You can't blame the band for budgetary constraints, but there's nothing here that you won't get from the original album on full volume and a pint of snakebite.

■■■■■■■■■■
Dave Everley

I'm With The Band

Pamela Des Barres

OMNIBUS PRESS

Memoirs of one the world's most famous groupies, reissued.



To be a teenage music fan is one of the most intense experiences a person can go through. You

discover your idols and it becomes all-encompassing, their lyrics given weight and meaning the writer may never have intended, as they're pored over with every repeated listen, rock-god sex appeal firing up already chaotic hormones. But few get to make their fantasies a reality in the way Pamela Des Barres did during the 60s and 70s.

In *I'm With The Band* (originally published in 1987), she encapsulates the starry-eyed lust and single-minded ambition of a boy-crazy teenage girl. But while intimate encounters with the likes of Jim Morrison and Mick Jagger tumble from the pages in a sweaty rush, there's much more to this book than just sex. There's a sense of real sisterhood with the other female rock fans and musicians on the scene, particularly after Frank Zappa put together her group, The GTOs. They save each other from frightening situations with dodgy men, support each other, understand the blind love they have for rock'n'roll and everything that goes with it.

The term 'groupie' is a derogatory one, but this joyous read bursts with a sense of independence, of following your desires with no apologies and no regrets, and it's all presented with a warmth and wit that just

makes you want to hit Sunset Strip with Miss Pamela for a night on the town.



Emma Johnston

All Gates Open: The Story Of Can

Rob Young

& Irmin Schmidt FABER & FABER

Authoritative tome on Krautrock pioneers.



Not least because it was co-written with a founder member of the band, this brick-like tome is surely

the definitive history of one of modern music's true originals.

It's at its best when dissecting the evolution of the band's sound, as their former keyboard player Schmidt guides Young through their frankly bonkers-sounding early jams, and the latter evokes the atmosphere of the squats, counter-culture and student protest movements that were the band's breeding ground.

As you might expect from a book about a band immersed in avant-garde ideas and experimental art, it's not exactly bursting at the seams with ribald anecdotes, but just the facts as they are soberly presented are entertaining enough. Sample quote from Schmidt: "I was playing a Remington electric shaver on the [piano] strings, and one night I went into it and it made a horrible sound when the strings came off, so I destroyed it." Good attitude.

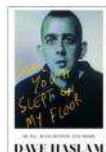


Johnny Sharp

Sonic Youth Slept on My Floor – Music, Manchester And More

Dave Haslam LITTLE BROWN

Evidence that, musically, Manchester rules.



The title refers to the ability of the independent (not indie) scene in Britain to look

after its own. At any given point, Manchester mainstay and teenage John Peel listener Dave Haslam wasn't merely a music journalist and Hacienda DJ, he was also a promoter, raconteur, myth maker and champion of new and exciting music, from punk right through the Madchester dance explosion of the late 1980s... and of course pioneer US noise band Sonic Youth slept on his floor – they slept on everyone's floors!

This memoir helps build the claim Manchester holds of being the pivotal UK music city of the past four decades, from parties on Moss Side to the horror of the recent Manchester Arena terror attack; a cast of hundreds – Morrissey, Peter Hook, Johnny Marr, Tony Wilson, Terry Hall, Mark E Smith... – all eminently recognisable, funny/strange and made all the more human by Haslam's familiarity and often mutual respect.

Witty, sometimes dark, revealing, insightful, everything one could hope for from one of those folk without whom independent music simply wouldn't exist.



Everett True

What's Big And Purple And Lives In The Ocean? The Moby Grape Story

Cam Cobb JAWBONE

An ardent fan's thorough account of the 1960s San Francisco group.



Moby Grape have been described as "more like a gang fight than a rock band".

Although they are still not extinct as a group, since their formation in 1965 theirs is a history of dissolutions, disappointments and downright disasters, from which a fine weave of folk, jazz, country and psychedelia somehow emerged. Guitarist/vocalist Skip Spence was an early victim of their mayhem, suffering a drugs-related breakdown, while they also suffered at the hands of early manager Matthew Katz, who, believing he had the rights to the name, sent another 'Moby Grape', comprised different musicians, on the road.

Cobb relates all of this, and much more, drawing on extensive interviews with band members Jerry Miller and Don Stevenson, among others. He orders the book rather oddly, though, only dealing with their rise to fame midway through, and approaches interviews with a rather amateur intensity: "Filled with curiosity, I ask Don if he remembers which songs they played together that day." The replies to such questions are often ponderous. Cumulatively, however, he conveys the vibe of 60s Frisco and the unique character of the band.



David Stubbs

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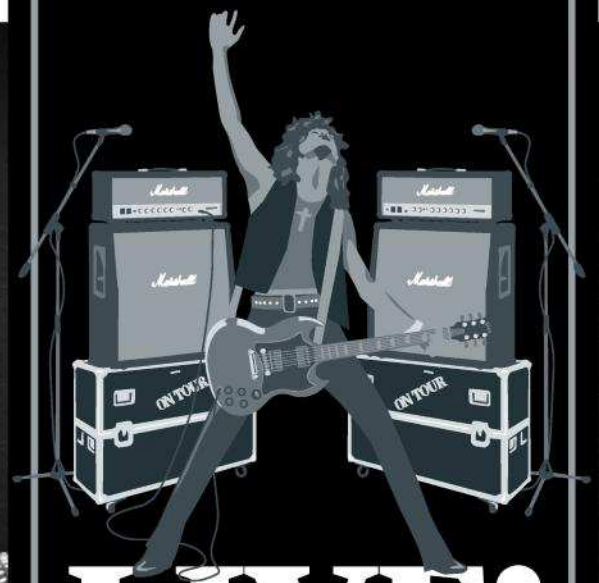
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LIVE!

THE HIGH-VOLTAGE WHAT'S ON GUIDE

EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM (REVIEWS) AND DAVE LING (TOURS)

P **114**

Greta Van Fleet

Just another band trying the crown
jewels for size, or are they really
the new Led Zeppelin?

P **108** INTERVIEWS

P **111** TOUR DATES

P **114** LIVE REVIEWS



LIVE!



"I like writing new songs and playing gigs and that's it, basically. That's what we do. I don't see this as a career."

Zodiac Mindwarp & The Love Reaction

The one-time *Prime Movers* play three (so far) whole *Tattooed Beat Messiah* shows.

Former graphic designer Mark Manning reinvented himself as Zodiac Mindwarp in the mid-80s. Together with his band the Love Reaction, which he put together in 1985, the singer released an immensely popular full-length debut, *Tattooed Beat Messiah*, in 1988, but criticised for the similarity of subsequent material, the bubble burst shortly afterwards. Three decades later, Zodiac and his latest Love Reaction line-up celebrate the staying power of that debut with some in-its-entirety shows.

At present there are only three anniversary gigs confirmed – one at a pub in New Cross plus a couple of festivals. Do you plan to play many more?

If anyone asks, then we'll do others. That's the plan, basically. We've never played the album all the way through before, and I must say that the idea quite appeals.

We were amused to learn that you don't have an official web page, just an old MySpace site.
Yeah, we've been a bit lazy with that kind of stuff.

What do you make of social media?

I like Facebook, it keeps you in touch. We do have a band page on there.

Surely it would make sense to have a better online presence?

Yeah, but then somebody would need paying. And at the end of the day, Cobalt [Stargazer, guitarist] and I are lazy fuckers.

Around the time of 2005's *Rock Savage* album, you told *Classic Rock*: "We don't concern ourselves with sales. Sales? That's way down the list, dear boy." So what's top of the list?

I like writing new songs and playing gigs and that's it, basically. That's what we do. I don't see this as a career [chuckles]. As long as people keep turning up, we can scrape by and we'll keep on doing it.

In that same interview you stated: "We don't have the infrastructure to compete with the likes of U2 and Coldplay, so you move on to the next one." You didn't even want to talk about the record you were plugging.

Well, it's there, isn't it? No matter what I say, people will either like it or they won't. And I give not one shit about that.

It's been eight years since the Love Reaction's most recent studio album, the Nordic-themed *We Are Volsung*.

A new one is finished, but then we realised there's no record industry any more. It died and nobody seemed to care. We'll probably just release it online and let people have it [for free].

It sounds as though you're no longer signed to SPV. Who put out the last one?

I don't know. The business side of things really annoys me so I leave that to Cobalt, who has a little more patience than me. But not much more.

You and Cobalt are stalwarts, while many musicians have travelled through the line-up.

Are you hard to work with?

That isn't the problem.

Most guys want paying, and we're tight bastards.

And besides, we never sack anybody, most of them just leave the country. That's what happened with Slam [Thunderhide, drummer].

You must be proud of your band having been around for thirty-three years?

Of course, it's quite an achievement. Most bands give up and become plumbers, don't they? This is something we have to do – it's in our bloodstream.

Another of your great quotes: "Once you've heard us, shit like Mötley Crüe seems... foolish."

I'm sure for a fourteen-year-old foolish kid they sound amazing. But that must have been my opinion on a grumpy morning.

At the beginning the Love Reaction had the world at their feet. If it were possible, would you go back and do anything differently?

We made just about every single mistake you could make, really. I don't think in terms of what might have been or I probably wouldn't still be doing this. But still we bumble along, forging our own little furrow. It's still fun. If it wasn't, I'd stop. **DL**

Zodiac Mindwarp And The Love Reaction play London's New Cross Inn on May 19.



MINDWARP IN MINIATURE

★ *Tattooed Beat Messiah* was a Top 20 album in the UK.
★ It included their best-known song, *Prime Mover*.
★ Former Love Reaction members include Trash D Garbage.



Koyo

The fast-rising modern proggers play more shows.

Frontman/guitarist/pianist Huw Edwards checks in as the young, critically feted UK-based band who one writer described as “the sound of 21st-century prog” continue a slow but steady ascension.

With last year's Reading and Leeds Festivals behind you and a spot at this year's Download confirmed, Koyo have achieved a lot in a short time frame. How have you achieved that?

When you consider that this time last year we hadn't released our first song, it must seem so, but to us it feels like an aeon [laughs]. However, we made an album when we had planned to make an EP, and that was two years in the planning.

Your recent club tour of the UK offered free admission every night. What was the thinking behind that?

Nobody pays to go to shows any more except for established acts. We wanted to provide a reason to come back and pay next time. People won't be converted to a band like ours until they've seen us live.

Were you surprised that Koyo's self-titled debut was ranked No.24 in Classic Rock's Best Albums Of 2017?

Of course! We're thankful for all of the support that you guys have given us – also from *Prog* magazine as well.

Reviewers seem to compare you a lot to Pink Floyd – specifically the Live At Pompeii era.

We use a lot of soundscapes, so I can see why it happens. That's our favourite Floyd era, also the early David Gilmour stuff.

Koyo are being likened to Zeppelin, Hawkwind, Alice In Chains, Radiohead, My Bloody Valentine, Flaming Lips.... Is there one artist that all the band appreciate?

All of those, really. And each of us is also into jazz – especially Tom [Higham] who is actually a jazz drummer.

When might we see a second album?

We've already started with a view to it coming out early next year.

Koyo's rise has been rapid. Is there any fear of burnout?

Not at all. In fact we're hungry for more. If anything we'd prefer things to go even faster still. **DL**

Koyo play UK shows until September.



Dan Baird & Homemade Sin

The US guitarist/singer rejoins his band after his cancer treatment.

Forced to sit out last summer's touring commitments after developing chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), former George Satellites frontman/guitarist Baird has been in remission for the past three months and this year is set to play two UK tours with his band.

How are you feeling now?

I'm much, much better. The chemo drugs were hard on the system, but they beat the hell out of dying. The doctors told me that after they wear off the fog would lift, and it's exactly what happened.

You're now fully in remission?

Yeah. The treatment began in September, and by the end of November I was in remission, but you have to complete the course of drugs. Compared to other forms of the disease, well... mine was a walk in the park. If you're going to get cancer, CLL is the guy to get. In fact we've already written a mess of songs and started on a new record.

We'll get to the new album shortly. But the illness crept

up on you, and for a while you performed seated?

The last show was done on a stool, but we discussed [the fact that I was ill] before we took the stage. I went straight to the hospital as soon as the gig was over. The guys took care of the last three UK dates, and I went in for treatment.

Homemade Sin played on without you, with Joe Blanton from your other group The Bluefields filling in as guitarist.

“Chemo drugs were hard, but they beat the hell out of dying.”

Did anyone demand their money back because you weren't there?

I didn't hear of anybody. The band did a small US tour with Joe as the singer and with our new bass player, Sean Savacool. A couple of venues didn't want the booking, but most places gave it a try.

Did you hear any recordings of the shows done in your absence?

Yeah. And the one thing that stood out is that Joe Blanton can sing in pitch so good it makes me angry.

A Facebook update suggested that the best wishes of fans helped you overcome the illness.

When you've got positive energy focused towards you, that's a great thing. I'm quite a spiritual guy, and that carries weight with me.

What can you tell us about the new album you're working on?

On our budget it's gonna be a good record, I tell ya. It might be ready by the second leg of the tour.

After the past couple of years it must be nice that you have some good news.

Fifty years ago I was a dead man. But now my oncologist tells me I'm ahead of schedule, and that's good enough for me. **DL**

Dan Baird & Homemade Sin tour the UK throughout the summer and then return in December.



LIVE!



Brothers Osborne

Will the American country-rock duo get their *Willie* out? Maybe.

Siblings duo John (guitar) and TJ Osborne (vocals), three times Grammy nominees, undertake their first headlining tour of the UK in promotion of their second album, *Port Saint Joe*, which was recorded in the Florida town of the same name. John says he can't wait.

Before moving to Nashville you grew up in Deale, Maryland. How did that affect your music?

It's a small, blue-collar town, and I guess you'd say TJ and I got our grounding in music via jam sessions that took place at our house. We also learned how to drink beer and look after ourselves [laughs].

Which one of you decided to move to Nashville and try to forge a career?

I was the first one to head out here, and TJ followed. We had been raised in a musical household and both shared that same passion.

How would you say the newly released *Port Saint Joe* improves upon its predecessor, 2016's *Pawn Shop*?

We've grown as players, singers and above all as writers. The new

one represents the band we are right now, after playing hundreds of shows.

You talk about your music as country rock and not southern rock. Is that on purpose?

Well, we didn't grow up in the south; Maryland is right in the middle. We are certainly influenced by that music and its culture. Come to one of our shows and you'll hear that. But no, I don't see us as southern rock.

"We didn't grow up in the south. I don't see us as southern rock."

For a while now the lines between country, rock and pop have been becoming increasingly blurred.

We've been in Nashville for fifteen years and this city has changed us. It's become a safe haven for people who grew up listening to old rock music. The actual genre of rock is now quite hard to define, but Nashville has its fair share of that.

Last year you supported Nashville neighbours The Cadillac Three on UK dates. By all accounts it was a big success.

Oh, it was. Those were our first dates over there, and we fell in love with the place. My wife is British, and we met some of the best crowds we've played for. The Cadillac Three are among our favourite people on the planet, so we were hung over every day.

Blackberry Smoke, Black Stone Cherry, TC3 and Whiskey Myers have all broken into the UK with a particular style of American music. Any theories why?

Country became very over-produced and poppy, and rock music maybe fell into a bit of a gap. All I can guess is that people wanted something grittier.

With a British spouse you must know the slang meaning of the word "willy"? It gives a whole new slant to your song title *Weed, Whisky And Willie*?

You can interpret music however you want [laughs]. Whatever floats your boat, man. **DL**

The tour begins in Dublin on May 4.



Danny Bryant

The British blueser steps up and plays his biggest gigs yet.

Described recently by *Classic Rock* as "the best album of his career", *Revelation* was also the hardest album that British blues guitarist Danny Bryant has made. He explains why he felt the need to suffer.

After the loss of both your father and an old friend, you were afflicted by a deep depression for the making of *Revelation*.

I prefer to make music that's based on personal experience. I was very close to my dad, who also played bass in my band for years, but the album is inspired by everyday life - things all of us go through.

Didn't the writing of it make you question some things?

My wife and I nursed dad in his final months. I've never been religious, but watching this proud man fade away before my eyes made me very much aware of my own mortality.

Can an album be too personal?

Maybe. But the beauty of music is that anyone can read anything into a song.

With some of the tracks embellished by a nine-piece big band, it certainly isn't depressing stuff.

No, the darkness is only in a lyrical sense. We do a lot of touring, and this album will be fun to take on the road. It's a snapshot. If I win the lottery my next album will be a lot more fucking cheerful [laughs].

And did it have the cathartic effect that you had hoped for?

Yeah. Time is a healer, and it's always good to get your feelings out into the open.

It's perhaps a surprise that there are no special guests on *Revelation*.

I wanted to keep things personal, and none of the songs seem to lend themselves to bringing in outsiders to help me out. Why use guests just for trying to sell a few more copies?

Has your mentor Walter Trout heard it?
He's heard one track and loved it.

You're playing some bigger halls on this tour. For example the London date is at the Islington Academy.

I'm a bit nervous about upping the ticket sales, but there comes a time when you must step up, and this is it for me. **DL**

Bryant's tour kicks off in Bilston on May 7.

Tour Dates

ACOUSTIC FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN STEVE HARLEY, JOHN ILLSLEY, CHRIS DIFFORD, MORE

Utttoxeter Racecourse Jun 1-3

BRYAN ADAMS

Manchester Arena May 24
Birmingham Genting Arena May 25
Glasgow The Hydro May 26
Leeds First Direct Arena May 27
Newcastle Metro Radio Arena May 29
London Wembley Arena May 30
London O2 Arena May 31

THE ALARM

Glasgow ABC May 4
Holmfirth Picturedrome May 5
London Kentish Town Forum May 26

ALICE IN CHAINS

Leeds Academy Jun 16
London Shepherd's Bush Empire Jul 17

THE DEVON ALLMAN PROJECT, DUANE BETTS

Bristol The Fleece Sep 2
Bilston Robin 2 Sep 3
London Islington Assembly Hall Sep 4
Newcastle Riverside Sep 6
Leeds Brudenell Social Club Sep 7
Manchester Academy 3 Sep 8

AMPLIFIED FESTIVAL THERAPY?, WARRIOR SOUL, SOIL, MORE

Gloucestershire Quarrydowns Jul 6-8

ANATHEMA

Holmfirth Picturedrome Jun 16
London Stone Free Festival Jun 17

A NEW DAY FESTIVAL HAWKWIND, CARAVAN, GONG, CARL PALMER, MORE

Faversham Mount Ephraim Gardens Aug 3-5

A PERFECT CIRCLE

Manchester Apollo Jun 12
London Brixton Academy Jun 13

ATOMIC ROOSTER

Twickenham Eel Pie Club Jul 26

DAN BAIRD & HOMEMADE SIN

Winchester Railway Inn May 18
Sutton Boom Boom Club May 21
Grimsby Yardsbirds Club May 22
Evesham Iron Road May 23
Alva Masonic Hall May 26
Kinross Green Hotel May 27
Kendal Bootleggers Bar May 31
Reading Face Bar Jun 1
Southend-on-Sea Chinnerys Jun 2
Glasgow ABC2 Dec 4
Sheffield The Greystones Dec 6
Leicester The Musician Dec 7
Newcastle The Cluny Dec 8
London Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall Dec 9
Manchester Academy 3 Dec 10

BALAAM AND THE ANGEL

Wolverhampton Slade Rooms May 4
Bedford Esquires May 5
Nottingham Rescue Rooms May 11
Brighton The Haunt May 12

BATH FESTIVAL

ROBERT PLANT, TEARS FOR FEARS, MORE
Bath Recreational Showground May 26, 27

BEARDED THEORY FESTIVAL ROBERT PLANT, JESUS & MARY CHAIN, THERAPY?, MORE

Derbyshire Catton Hall May 24-27

JEFF BECK

Nottingham Royal Centre Jun 12
Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Jun 13
London Chelsea Royal Hospital Jun 15
Liverpool Philharmonic Hall Jun 16

BIG BIG TRAIN, BEATRIX PLAYERS

Basingstoke The Anvil Jul 11

BLACKBERRY SMOKE

Newcastle Academy Nov 2
Glasgow Academy Nov 3
Nottingham Rock City Nov 4
Belfast Telegraph Building Nov 6
Dublin National Stadium Nov 7

Cardiff Tramshed Nov 9
Birmingham Academy Nov 10
Bristol Academy Nov 11
Southampton Guildhall Nov 13
London Shepherd's Bush Empire Nov 15, 16
Manchester Apollo Nov 17

BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL JUDAS PRIEST, NIGHTWISH, MR. BIG, DORO, MORE

Derbyshire Catton Park Aug 9-12

THE BLUES BAND

London Chelsea Under The Bridge Jul 20

BLUES ON THE FARM KING KING, NINE BELOW ZERO, MARTIN BARRE'S BLUES BAND, MORE

Canterbury Woolton Farm Jun 15-17

JOE BONAMASSA

London Hampton Court Palace Jun 12

THE GRAHAM BONNET BAND

Glasgow Garage Aug 8
Aberdeen The Assembly Aug 9
Edinburgh Bannermans Bar Aug 10
Louth Town Hall Aug 11
Newcastle Trillians Aug 12
Manchester Rebellion Aug 14
Hull O'Rileys Aug 15
Stoke-on-Trent Eleven Aug 16
Belfast Limelight Aug 17
Dublin Button Factory Aug 18
Pontypridd Muni Arts Centre Aug 19
Bilston Robin 2 Aug 21
London Camden Underworld Aug 22
Blackpool Waterloo Music Bar Aug 23
Buckley Tivoli Aug 24
Newark Stonedeaf Festival Aug 25

Recommended

THE BREEDERS

Dublin Vicar Street May 27
Edinburgh Liquid Rooms May 28
Leeds Stylus May 29
London Chalk Farm Roundhouse May 30
Bristol Academy Jul 10
Birmingham Institute Jul 11
Manchester The Ritz Jul 13

BRITISH STEEL FESTIVAL GRIM REAPER, AVENGER, DESOLATION ANGELS, MORE

London Camden Underworld May 25, 26

BRITROCK MUST BE DESTROYED! REEF, THE WILDHEARTS, TERRORVISION, DODGY

Manchester Academy May 4
Birmingham Digbeth Arena May 5
London Hammersmith Apollo May 6
Glasgow Academy May 19
Newcastle Academy May 20
Leeds Academy May 24
Bristol Motion May 25
Portsmouth Guildhall May 26

BROTHER FIRETRIBE

London Highbury Garage Jun 11
Birmingham Actress And Bishop Jun 12
Manchester Factory Jun 13
Glasgow Cathouse Jun 15

BROTHERS OSBORNE

Bristol Academy May 7
Brighton Concorde 2 May 8
Birmingham Academy 2 May 9
London Camden Koko May 11
Manchester The Ritz May 12
Glasgow ABC May 13

DANNY BRYANT

Bilston Robin 2 May 7
Cambridge Junction May 8
London Islington Bar Academy May 9
Aberdeen Tunnels May 10
Derby Flowerpot May 11
St Helens Citadel May 12
Bishops Cleeve Tithe Barn May 13
Norwich Waterfront Jun 7
Fleet The Harlington Jun 8
Narberth Queens Hall Jun 9
Tavistock Wharf Jun 10

DEF LEPPARD



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See below for dates. Currently December 3 to 18.

Dublin Whelan's Jun 12
Belfast Empire Jun 13
Glasgow Oran Mor Jun 14
Cleethorpes Blues Festival Jun 16
Stamford Blues Festival Jun 17

BULLET

London Islington Academy 2 May 16

CAMBRIDGE ROCK FESTIVAL FOCUS, ATOMIC ROOSTER, SPACE ELEVATOR, KING KING, DARE, MORE

Cambridge Horseheath Lodge Jul 26-29

FRANCK CARDUCCI

Southampton Talking Heads Jul 26
Leicester Firebug Jul 27
Swindon The Vic Jul 28
Cambridge Rock Festival Jul 29

CATS IN SPACE

Hockley The Touchline Jun 17

NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS, PATTI SMITH, MORE

London Victoria Park All Points East Festival Jun 3

ROGER CHAPMAN FAMILY & FRIENDS

London Chelsea Under The Bridge Aug 3
Hants Wickham Festival Aug 5

CHELTHENHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL VAN MORRISON, IMELDA MAY, ERIC GALES, BETH HART, MORE

Cheltenham Montpellier Gardens May 2-7

ERIC CLAPTON, SANTANA, STEVE WINWOOD, MORE

London Hyde Park BST Festival Jul 8

CLEETHORPES BLUES, RHYTHM AND ROCK FESTIVAL GROUNDHOGS, PAUL LAMB & THE KING SNAKES, MORE

Cleethorpes Moon On The Water Jun 16

JOHN COGHAN'S QUO

Morecambe The Platform May 25
Wavendon The Stables Jun 9
Stoke-on-Trent Eleven Jun 23
Marlborough Manton Fest Jun 30
Hook Norton Music At The Crossroads Jul 7

CROPREDY FESTIVAL BRIAN WILSON, FAIRPORT CONVENTION, FISH, MORE

Banbury Cropredy Village Aug 9-11

SHERYL CROW

Birmingham Symphony Hall Jun 19
Gateshead The Sage Jun 21
Nottingham Royal Concert Hall Jun 22

CRAZYHEAD

London Oxford Street 100 Club May 4
Leicester De Montfort Hall May 26
Catton Hall Bearded Theory Festival May 27
Corby White Heart Aug 18
Leicester The Donkey Dec 1
Stourbridge The Claptrap Dec 8

THE DAMNED

Holmfirth Picturedrome Aug 23
Warrington Parr Hall Aug 24

DANZIG

Glasgow Barrowland Aug 6
London Brixton Academy Aug 7

DEF LEPPARD, CHEAP TRICK

Dublin 3 Arena Dec 1
Belfast SSE Arena Dec 2
Cardiff Motorpoint Arena Dec 4
London O2 Arena Dec 6
Nottingham Motorpoint Arena Dec 8
Newcastle Metro Radio Arena Dec 9
Glasgow Hydro Arena Dec 11
Manchester Arena Dec 12
Sheffield FlyDSA Arena Dec 14
Liverpool Echo Arena Dec 15
Birmingham Arena Dec 17
London Wembley Arena Dec 18

DEFTONES

London Royal Festival Hall Jun 20

DESERTFEST MONSTER MAGNET, NAPALM DEATH, GRAVEYARD, MORE

London Various venues May 4-6

DOWNLOAD FESTIVAL OZZY OSBOURNE, GUNS N' ROSES, AVENGED SEVENFOLD, MORE

Leicestershire Donington Park Jun 8-10

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN

Edinburgh Usher Hall May 23
Birmingham Symphony Hall May 26
Manchester Bridgewater Hall May 28
Gateshead The Sage May 30
London Royal Albert Hall Jun 1

EELS

London Brixton Academy Jul 2
Manchester Academy Jul 3

EUROPE, KING KING

Manchester Academy Sep 14
Glasgow Barrowland Sep 15
Newcastle Academy Sep 17
Nottingham Rock City Sep 18
Birmingham Institute Sep 19
Cardiff St David's Hall Sep 21
Portsmouth Pyramids Centre Sep 22
London Royal Albert Hall Sep 23
Brighton Dome Sep 24

FEDERAL CHARM

Manchester Deaf Institute May 12
Newcastle The Cluny May 18

FISH

Edinburgh Queen's Hall Sep 22
Liverpool Academy Sep 23
Leamington Spa Assembly Rooms Sep 24
Newcastle Academy Dec 2
Manchester The Ritz Dec 3
Norwich UEA Dec 4
London Islington Assembly Hall Dec 7, 8
Nottingham Rock City Dec 11



LIVE!

Hull	City Hall	Dec 12
Glasgow	Academy	Dec 13

FM

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	May 18
Norwich	Waterfront	May 19
Glasgow	Garage	May 25
Newcastle	Academy	May 26
Manchester	The Ritz	Jun 9

FOO FIGHTERS

Manchester	Etihad Stadium	Jun 19
London	Stadium	Jun 22, 23

FOREIGNER, JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR, JOHN PARR

Manchester	Apollo	May 12
Glasgow	Clyde Auditorium	May 13
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	May 15
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 16

GARBAGE

London	Brixton Academy	Sep 14
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JANET GARDNER

Nottingham	Rock City	May 24
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THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM, THE FLATLINERS, MATTHEW RYAN

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jul 20
Dublin	Vicar Street	Jul 23
Glasgow	Barrowland	Jul 24
Manchester	Apollo	Jul 25

GLASSJAW

London	Brixton Academy	Aug 18
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GOO GOO DOLLS

Bristol	Academy	Jul 24
Manchester	The Ritz	Jul 25
London	Brixton Academy	Jul 26

MYKE GRAY

London	Islington Academy 2	Jun 6
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STEVE HACKETT & ORCHESTRA

Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Oct 1
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Oct 3
London	Royal Festival Hall	Oct 4
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Oct 5
Gateshead	The Sage	Oct 7
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Oct 8
Ipswich	Regent	Oct 10
London	Palladium	Oct 11

HALESTORM

Maidstone	Ramblin' Man Fair	Jul 1
Dublin	Academy	Sep 19
Belfast	Limelight	Sep 20
Sheffield	Academy	Sep 22
Glasgow	Academy	Sep 23
Birmingham	Academy	Sep 24
Manchester	Apollo	Sep 26
London	Brixton Academy	Sep 28
Bristol	Academy	Sep 29

HARD ROCK HELL AOR UFO, TYKETTO, MITCH MALLOY, TIGERTAILZ, MORE

Pwllheli	Hafan Y Môr Holiday Park	Mar 14-17
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STEVE HARLEY & COCKNEY REBEL

Leamington Spa	Assembly Rooms	Aug 3
Newcastle	Tyne Journal Theatre	Aug 5

JOHN HIATT & THE GONERS FEATURING SONNY LANDRETH

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Jul 2, 3
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HARPENDEN BLUES FESTIVAL THE PRETTY THINGS, AYSLEY LISTER, SIMON MCBRIDE, MORE

Harpenden	Public Halls	May 13
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BETH HART

Portsmouth	Guildhall	May 1
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 4
Cheltenham	Jazz Festival	May 5

HAWKWIND & ORCHESTRA

Salford	The Lowry	Oct 18
Leeds	Town Hall	Oct 19
Gateshead	The Sage	Oct 20
London	Palladium	Nov 4, 5
Bath	Forum	Nov 24
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Nov 25

HEAVY PETTIN'

Glasgow	Cathouse	Oct 16
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ROBYN HITCHCOCK

Manchester	Academy	May 11
London	Malet Street ULU	May 12
Witney	Fat Li's	May 15
Bristol	Louisiana	May 16

BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL



Judas Priest (pictured), Nightwish and Mr. Big headline this year's bill for one of Britain's best-loved festivals.

Derbyshire Catton Park Aug 9-12

Cambridge	Unitarian Church	May 18
St Leonards	Kino-Teatr	May 19
Hull	Fruit	May 22
Liverpool	Philharmonic Music Room	May 23
Glasgow	Oran Mor	May 24
Sheffield	Hubs	May 25
Morecambe	More Music	May 26
Newton Abbot	Kingkerswell Church	May 29
Ramsgate	Music Hall	May 31
Dublin	Workman's Club	Jun 1

HOLLYWOOD VAMPIRES (ALICE COOPER, JOE PERRY, JOHNNY DEPP), THE DARKNESS, THE DAMNED

Birmingham	Genting Arena	Jun 16
Manchester	Arena	Jun 17
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 19
London	Wembley Arena	Jun 20

GLENN HUGHES PLAYS CLASSIC DEEP PURPLE

Belfast	Waterfront	Sep 29
Dublin	Olympia	Sep 30
Bristol	Academy	Oct 2
Leamington Spa	The Assembly	Oct 3
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Oct 5
Cardiff	Tramshed	Oct 6
Leeds	University Union	Oct 9
Newcastle	Academy	Oct 10
Glasgow	ABC	Oct 12
Manchester	Academy 2	Oct 13
London	Camden Koko	Oct 15

Recommended

BILLY IDOL

Manchester	Apollo	Jun 20
Birmingham	Academy	Jun 21
London	Brixton Academy	Jun 23

IRON MAIDEN, KILLSWITCH ENGAGE

Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	Jul 31
Belfast	SSE Arena	Aug 2
Aberdeen	Exhibition & Conference Centre	Aug 4
Manchester	Arena	Aug 6
Birmingham	Genting Arena	Aug 7
London	O2 Arena	Aug 10, 11

JADIS

Southampton	Talking Heads	May 3
St Helens	Citadel	May 4
London	Tufnell Park Dome	May 5

WILKO JOHNSON

Bath	The Forum	May 3
Oxford	Academy	May 4
Norwich	UEA	May 5
Leeds	Stylus	May 10
Glasgow	ABC	May 11
Manchester	Academy	May 12

LAURENCE JONES

Manchester	Band On The Wall	May 3
Leamington Spa	Zephyr Lounge	May 4

Southampton	Talking Heads	May 5
Birmingham	Hare & Hounds	May 10
Nottingham	Bodega	May 11
York	Fulford Arms	May 12
Newcastle	The Cluny	May 13

KILLING JOKE

Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 2
Leeds	Academy	Nov 3
Newcastle	Northumbria University	Nov 4
Glasgow	Barrowland	Nov 6
Manchester	Academy	Nov 7
Birmingham	Institute	Nov 9
Bristol	Academy	Nov 10
Southampton	Guildhall	Nov 11
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Nov 13
Norwich	UEA	Nov 14
Oxford	Academy	Nov 16
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Nov 17

KING KING

Hastings	St Mary In The Castle	May 3
Pontypridd	Muni Arts Centre	May 4
Southampton	1865	May 5
Liverpool	Epstein Theatre	May 10
Whitley Bay	Playhouse	May 11
Clitheroe	The Grand	May 12
Chester	Live Rooms	May 17
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	May 18
Holmfirth	Picturedome	May 19
Leeds	Cheese & Grain	May 26
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	May 27
Bilston	Robin 2	May 31
Bury St Edmunds	The Apex	Jun 1
Newport	Blues, Rhythmn & Rock Festival	Jun 2

RICHIE KOTZEN

London	Stone Free Festival	Jun 17
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Jun 21
Manchester	Academy	Jun 22
Norwich	Waterfront	Jun 23
Bristol	Thekla	Jun 24

KOYO

London	Hackney Sebright Arms	May 1
Leeds	Live In Leeds Festival	May 5
London	Camden Rocks Festival	Jun 2
Corby	White Hart	Jun 7
Donington Park	Download Festival	Jun 10

LENNY KRAVITZ

Manchester	Apollo	Jun 19
Birmingham	Arena	Jun 20
London	Wembley Arena	Jun 22

LEICESTER BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL

WALTER TROUT, DR FEELGOOD, CLIMAX BLUES BAND, MORE		
Leicester	Arena	Jun 3

LINCOLN BLUES FESTIVAL THE PRETTY THINGS, AYSLEY LISTER, SIMON MCBRIDE, MORE

Lincoln	Drill Hall	May 12
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JEFF LYNNE'S ELO

Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Sep 30
Glasgow	Hydro Arena	Oct 3

Manchester	Arena	Oct 5, 6
Newcastle	Metro Radio Arena	Oct 9
Birmingham	Arena	Oct 10, 12, 13
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Oct 15
London	O2 Arena	Oct 17, 18, 20, 21
Liverpool	Echo Arena	Oct 23

MACHINE HEAD

Southampton	Guildhall	May 13
Cardiff	University	May 14
Bristol	Academy	May 15
Birmingham	Academy	May 17
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	May 18, 19
Nottingham	Rock City	May 21
Newcastle	Academy	May 22
Glasgow	Academy	May 23
Manchester	Academy	May 25

MANIC STREET PREACHERS

Llandudno	Venue Cymru Arena	May 1
Leeds	First Direct Arena	May 2
London	Wembley Arena	May 4
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	May 5
London	Royal Festival Hall	Jun 19

RYAN MCGARVEY, MARK PONTIN GROUP, SUGARMAN SAM & THE VOODOO MEN

London	Manette Street Borderline	Jun 11
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PUNKY MEADOWS & FRANK DIMINO, HEAVY PETTIN'

Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Oct 12
London	Camden Underworld	Oct 13
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 14
Edinburgh	Bannerman's	Oct 15
Newcastle	Trillians	Oct 17
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 18

MINISTRY, CHELSEA WOLFE

Nottingham	Rock City	Jul 17
Glasgow	O2 ABC	Jul 18
Manchester	Albert Hall	Jul 20
London	Kentish Town Forum	Jul 21
Belfast	Limelight	Jul 23
Dublin	Tivoli	Jul 24
Bristol	SWX	Jul 25

MONSTER MAGNET

London	Camden Desertfest	May 6
Manchester	Gorilla	May 31
Glasgow	Garage	Jun 1
Belfast	Limelight	Jun 2
Dublin	Tivoli	Jun 3

ALANIS MORISSETTE

Cork	Marquee	Jul 4
Dublin	Iveagh Gardens	Jul 5
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jul 7, 13
Oxford	Corbunry Festival	Jul 16

IAN MOSS

Glasgow	Classic Grand	May 12
Bilston	Robin 2	May 15
Manchester	Night And Day Café	May 16
London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	May 18
Dublin	The Loft	May 18

MY BLOODY VALENTINE

London	Royal Festival Hall	Jun 23
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NICKELBACK, SEETHER

Glasgow	The Hydro	May 3
Leeds	First Direct Arena	May 5
Liverpool	Echo Arena	May 7
Manchester	Arena	May 8
Birmingham	Genting Arena	May 10
London	O2 Arena	May 11
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	May 13

NINE INCH NAILS

London	Royal Festival Hall	Jun 22
London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 24

CARL PALMER'S ELP LEGACY

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Aug 2
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DAN PATLANSKY

Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Nov 21
Norwich	Waterfront	Nov 22
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Nov 23
Chester	Live Rooms	Nov 24
Bury	The Met	Nov 25
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Nov 27
Bromsgrove	Artrix	Nov 28
London	Islington Academy	Nov 29
Bristol	The Tunnels	Nov 30

JIZZY PEARL

Edinburgh	Bannermans	May 2
Newcastle	Think Tank	May 3
Chesterfield	Real Time Live	May 4
Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	May 5
Cardiff	Seven Sins Festival	May 6
Oxford	The Bullingdon	May 9
Evesham	Iron Road	May 10

Buckley	Tivoli	May 11
Ballymena	Diamond Rock Club	May 12
London	Camden Underworld	May 13
Reading	Face Bar	May 16
Norwich	Waterfront	May 17
Carlisle	Embers	May 18
Glasgow	Audio	May 19
Blackpool	Waterloo	May 20
Manchester	Gullivers	May 24
Birmingham	Asylum 2	May 25
Leicester	Firebug	May 26
Bournemouth	The Anvil	May 27

PEARL JAM

London	O2 Arena	Jun 18, 19
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PENDRAGON

London	Great Portland Street 229 Club	Nov 9
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PLACEBO

London	Southbank Centre	Jun 16
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PREMIATA FORNERIA MARCONI

Southampton	1865	May 16
London	Islington Academy	May 17

THE PRETTY THINGS

Lincoln	Blues, Rhythm & Rock Festival	May 12
Harpندن	Public Halls	May 13
Isle of Wight	Festival	Jun 24
London	Putney Half Moon	Jul 13

PRIMAL FEAR

London	Tufnell Park Dome	Oct 11
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THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS, THE CHURCH

London	Royal Festival Hall	Jun 15
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Q5

London	Camden Underworld	Aug 25
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QUEEN + ADAM LAMBERT

London	Wembley Arena	Jul 1
London	O2 Arena	Jul 2, 4
Glasgow	TRNSMT Festival	Jul 6

Recommended**QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE, IGGY POP, THE HIVES, MORE**

London	Finsbury Park	Jun 30
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RAMBLIN' MAN FAIR**THE CULT, MOTT THE HOOPLE, HALESTORM, SONS OF APOLLO, STEEL PANTHER, MORE**

Maidstone	Mote Park	Jun 30, Jul 1
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READING AND LEEDS FESTIVALS**FALL OUT BOY, KINGS OF LEON, PANIC AT THE DISCO!, MORE**

Reading	Richfield Avenue	Aug 24-26
Leeds	Bramham Park	Aug 24-26

REBELLION FESTIVAL**PUBLIC IMAGE LTD, THE PROFESSIONALS, THE VANDALS, MORE**

Blackpool	Winter Gardens	Aug 2-5
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REDEMPTION FESTIVAL**AMORETTES, FAHRAN, HELL'S ADDICTION, A JOKER'S RAGE, MORE**

Wakefield	Warehouse 23	Sep 15
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REEF

Reading	Sub 89	May 10
Brighton	Concorde 2	May 11
Norwich	Waterfront	May 12
Edinburgh	Liquid Rooms	May 18

ROCK & BLUES CUSTOM SHOW**DAN REED NETWORK, KING KING, THE DEAD DAISIES, MORE**

Pentrich	Coney Grey Showground	Jul 26-28
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ROCKINGHAM FESTIVAL**NELSON, VIXEN, PRETTY MAIDS, GLASS TIGER, MORE**

Nottingham	Trent University	Oct 19-21
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THE ROLLING STONES

Dublin	Croke Park	May 5
London	London Stadium	May 22, 25
Southampton	St Mary's Stadium	May 29
Coventry	Ricoh Stadium	Jun 2
Manchester	Old Trafford	Jun 5
Edinburgh	Murrayfield Stadium	Jun 9
Cardiff	Principality Stadium	Jun 15
Twickenham	Stadium	Jun 19

ROSE TATTOO, GIRLSCHOOL

Glasgow	ABC	Sep 6
Belfast	Limelight 2	Sep 7

NINE INCH NAILS

Catch the Grammy-winning industrial band's muscular, hard-edged racket. (Spoiler: no soppy ballads.)

See opposite page for dates. Currently June 22 & 24.

Dublin	Voodoo Lounge	Sep 8
Birmingham	Academy 2	Sep 11
London	Islington Academy	Sep 13

SAXON, Y&T, WAYWARD SONS

Glasgow	Barrowland	Oct 18
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Oct 19
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Oct 20
Manchester	Academy	Oct 21

PAUL SIMON, JAMES TAYLOR, BONNIE RAITT, MORE

London	Hyde Park BST Festival	Jul 15
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THE SKIDS

Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Jun 1
Manchester	Academy	Jun 2
Reading	Sub 89	Jun 7
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Jun 8
Cardiff	Tramshed	Jun 9
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Jun 15
Newcastle	Academy	Jun 16
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Jun 23
Liverpool	Academy	Jun 23
Portsmouth	Wedgewood Rooms	Jun 27
Bilston	Robin 2	Jun 28
Brighton	Concorde 2	Jun 29
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jun 30

SONS OF APOLLO

Maidstone	Ramblin Man Fair	Jul 1
Motherwell	Concert Hall	Jul 2
Belfast	Limelight	Jul 3
Dublin	Tivoli	Jul 4
Brighton	Concorde 2	Jul 7
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Jul 8
Bristol	SWX	Sep 29
Glasgow	Garage	Sep 30
Manchester	Academy 2	Oct 1

SPACE ELEVATOR

Sutton-in-Ashfield	The Diamond	May 17
Bathgate	Dreadnought	May 18
Wigan	Old Courts Theatre	May 19
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	May 20
High Wycombe	Buckinghamshire University	May 24
London	The Hammersmith Club	May 25
Oxford	Bullingdon	May 31
Gravesend	Red Lion	Jun 15
Cambridge	Rock Festival	Jul 29

SPARKS

Glasgow	ABC	May 22
Leeds	Academy	May 23
London	Kentish Town Forum	May 24

STEELHOUSE FESTIVAL**GLENN HUGHES, BLACK STAR RIDERS, DAN REED NETWORK, QUIREBOYS, MORE**

Ebbw Vale	Hafod-Y-Dafal Farm	Jul 27-29
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STEREOPHONICS

Wrexham	Racecourse Ground	Jun 2
Cardiff	City Stadium	Jun 9

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS

Leeds	Millennium Square	May 25
Hatfield	Forum	May 26
Birmingham	NEC Lakeside	May 27

STONEDEAF FESTIVAL**SKID ROW, QUIREBOYS, ANVIL, MORE**

Nottingham	Newark Showgrounds	Aug 25
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STONE FREE FESTIVAL**SCORPIONS, YES: ANDERSON RABIN & WAKEMAN, MEGADETH, ROGER HODGSON, MORE**

London	O2 Arena	Jun 16, 17
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STONE SOUR

Manchester	Apollo	Jun 17
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Jun 18
Nottingham	Rock City	Jun 19

JAMES TAYLOR & ALL-STAR BAND, BONNIE RAITT

Manchester	Arena	Jul 9
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jul 10
Leeds	Direct Arena	Jul 12

THUNDER, HAND OF DIMES, CATS IN SPACE

Caerphilly	Castle	Jul 14
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TREMONTI

Glasgow	ABC	Jun 28
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jun 29
Birmingham	Institute	Jun 30
Portsmouth	Pyramids Centre	Jul 5

TRNSMT FESTIVAL**QUEEN & ADAM LAMBERT, THE DARKNESS, THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT, MORE**

Glasgow	Green	Jun 29-Jul 8
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TRINITY LIVE**STEVE ROTHERY, TOUCHSTONE, GHOST COMMUNITY, MORE**

London	Islington Assembly Hall	May 12
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STEVEN TYLER & NASHVILLE'S LOVING MARY BAND

London	Kentish Town Forum	Aug 7
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THE USED

Bristol	Academy	Aug 27
Nottingham	Rock City	Aug 28
Manchester	The Ritz	Aug 30
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Aug 31

VEGA, MIDNITE CITY

Lanarkshire	Wildfire Festival	Jun 23
Manchester	Ruby Lounge	Jun 28
Newcastle	Riverside	Jun 29
Glasgow	Stereo	Jun 30
Cardiff	Fuel	Jul 5
Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	Jul 6
London	Camden Underworld	Jul 7

WATCHET LIVE FESTIVAL REEF, CAST, FROM THE JAM, MORE

Watchet	The Down	Aug 24-26
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ROGER WATERS

Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 29
Liverpool	Echo Arena	Jul 2
Manchester	Arena	Jul 3

London	Hyde Park BST Festival	Jul 6
Birmingham	Arena	Jul 7

WHITBY BLUES FESTIVAL**CORKY LAING, CHANTEL MCGREGOR, STEVE NIMMO TRIO, MORE**

Whitby	Pavilion	Oct 13
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WHITE WIZZARD

London	Camden Underworld	Aug 18
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BARRENCE WHITFIELD & THE SAVAGES

Dublin	Grand Social	May 2
Belfast	Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival	May 3
Ballydehob	Jazz Festival	May 5
Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	May 9
Newcastle	The Cluny	May 10
Middlesbrough	Westgarth Social Club	May 11
Manchester	Soup Kitchen	May 12
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	May 13
Birmingham	Academy 3	May 15
Oxford	Academy 3	May 16
Southend-on-Sea	Railway	May 18
London	Highbury Garage	May 19

WILDFIRE FESTIVAL**LIONHEART, MASSIVE WAGONS, BLACK CAT BONES, MORE**

Biggar	Wiston Lodge	Jun 22-24
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WINTERSTORM FESTIVAL**MAGNUM, THE DEAD DAISIES, GUN, MORE**

Troon	Concert Hall	Nov 23, 24
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WISHBONE ASH

Whitby	Pavilion	Oct 12
Leicester	The Y Theatre	Oct 13
Hunstanton	Princess Theatre	Oct 16
Basingstoke	Haymarket	Oct 17
London	Islington Academy	Oct 18
Bury	The Met	Oct 19
Preston	53 Degrees	Oct 20
New Brighton	Floral Pavilion	Oct 21
Kendal	Bootleggers Bar	Oct 23
Carlisle	Old Fire Station	Oct 24
Glasgow	The Ferry	Oct 25
Lochelly	Centre	Oct 26
Edinburgh	La Belle Angele	Oct 27
Inverness	Ironworks	Oct 28
Stockton-on-Tees	The ARC	Oct 30
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Nov 1
Leamington Spa	Assembly Rooms	Nov 2
Buckley	Tivoli	Nov 3
Pontardawe	Arts Centre	Nov 4
Swindon	Arts Centre	Nov 6
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Nov 7
Southampton	The Brook	Nov 8
Wimborne	Tivoli	Nov 9
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Nov 10
Bude	Blues, Rhythm & Rock Festival	Nov 11
Wavendon	The Stables	Nov 13
Harpندن	Public Halls	Nov 14
Derby	Flowerpot	Nov 15
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Nov 16

WITHIN TEMPTATION

Birmingham	Academy	Nov 9
Manchester	Apollo	Nov 10
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 11
London	Brixton Academy	Nov 13

WRECKLESS ERIC

Manchester	Gulliver's	May 9
Barnoldswick	Music & Arts Centre	May 10
Hull	O'Reilly's	May 11
Durham	Old Cinema Laundrette	May 12
Dundee	Clarks	May 13
Glasgow	Hug & Pint	May 14
Worcester	Marr's Bar	May 17
Bristol	Thunderbolt	May 18
Leeds	Fox & Newt	May 19
Cromer	Community Hall	May 20
Cambridge	Junction	May 21
Brighton	Prince Albert	May 23
London	Great Portland St 229 Club	May 24
Colchester	Arts Centre	May 25
Ramsgate	Music Hall	May 26
Leicester	The Musician	May 27

YES FEATURING ANDERSON, RABIN & WAKEMAN

Newcastle	City Hall	Jun 12
York	Barbican	Jun 13
London	O2 Arena Stone Free Festival	Jun 17

ZODIAC MINDWARP & THE LOVE REACTION

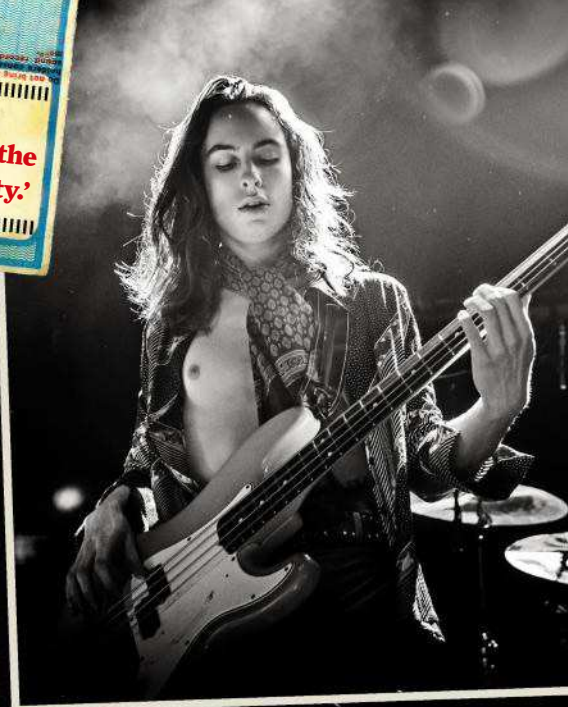
London	New Cross Inn	May 19
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THE ZOMBIES

Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	Jun 6
Cardiff	Tramshed	Jun 12
Leamington Spa	The Assembly	Jun 13
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jun 14
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Jun 16



LIVE!



Josh Kiszka: channelling Robert Plant right down to his squeezed-lemon wail.

Greta Van Fleet

London Islington Academy

The Second Coming of Led Zeppelin materialises in London. Hallelujah!

★ Back in 1988, a radio station in Detroit began playing a brand new Led Zeppelin song. Titled *Get It On*, it was exactly the sort of huffing, preening, big-riffing number that Page and Plant coughed out 15 years earlier, right down to the cock-caught-in-a-zipper wail that rocketed it skywards. At least everyone assumed it was Zep; the station never said. But who cared? Heavy rotation and pre-internet buzz followed. The Second Coming Of Led Zeppelin was on!

Except it wasn't. No, this was a brazen music business bait-and-switch. The band were not Zeppelin, but a bunch of soundalike chancers called Kingdom Come, and 'Robert Plant' was an ex-pat Hamburg hairdresser named Lenny Wolf. By the time the cat was out of the bag, it was too late and Kingdom Come

were well on their way to a platinum record. The lesson: never underestimate the public's appetite for Led Zeppelin songs, even when they're being played by German hairdressers.

Thirty years on, that appetite hasn't abated. Michigan's Greta Van Fleet have rocked up on British shores on a wave of excitement that pitches them as 2018's great white hopes. Certainly the boxy Islington Academy is as stuffed as Percy Plant's strides circa 1973, and the atmosphere is heavy with the kind of fevered anticipation that's all too rare these days for new guitar bands.

It's not difficult to work out why. Greta Van Fleet haven't so much half-inched Zeppelin's sound as coshed it on the back of the head, bundled it in the

boot of their car and are currently holding it for ransom in the Riot House.

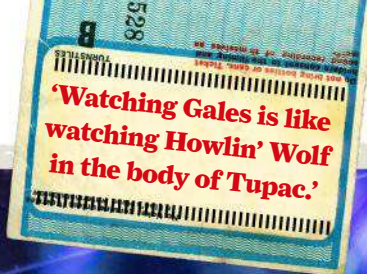
Their two EPs to date barely bother to conceal the influence. Even if you somehow fail to hear the echo of a dragon-suited Jimmy Page in Jake Kiszka's front-foot guitar heroics, you'd have to be stone deaf to listen to his identical twin brother Josh's squeezed-lemon wail and not think: 'Hang on, that sounds *really* familiar.' The weird thing is that Josh and Jake are 21, their bass-playing brother Sam is 19. It's not that they weren't even born when Led Zeppelin split up, it's that they were barely even born when Page and Plant split up.

But the 800-plus people here tonight really couldn't give a toss about any of that. They're here precisely because Greta Van Fleet sound exactly like Led Zeppelin used to. And when you really think about it, there aren't a lot of people who sound exactly like Led Zeppelin used to. Especially not the people who used to be in Led Zeppelin.

Which goes some way to explaining the eruption of excitement that greets the four-piece when they



LIVE!



Five go mad in Holland: (l-r) Jan Akkerman, Lance Lopez, Quinn Sullivan, Gary Hoey, Eric Gales.



Rockin' The Blues: Eric Gales, Quinn Sullivan, Gary Hoey and Lance Lopez Zoetermeer Cultuurpodium Boerderij, The Netherlands

Four blues-guitar hot-shots pool their substantial resources, and a guest appearance from a Dutch master brings a little Focus.

★ There's a grey post box in the entrance hall of the Boerderij, with two slots marked 'Drugs' and 'Wapens'. For a moment we wonder if we've stepped into some sort of Dutch gangland, in a car park just off a motorway, in a relatively obscure corner of Holland.

Our local companions tell us the venue is a classic rock hot-spot, where rock and blues fans head from across the country to catch local and international artistes. Indeed as clean-cut punters start to file in (without depositing shooters, knives or suspicious substances), it's clear they're here for the music. Posters of UFO, Michael Schenker and various Dutch acts are dotted across the walls. At the bar there isn't a plastic pint of Carlsberg in sight; just goblets and tankards of Dutch and Belgian beers. It's a relaxed, genial vibe, though, for tonight's bill of Dutch label Mascot Records-signed bluesers; a night of quality guitar porn, essentially, for blues and guitar fans.

First up is Gary Hoey, the beaming Bostonian who almost became Ozzy Osbourne's guitarist (Zakk Wylde got the gig) and ended up making 20 albums under his own steam. If he weren't such a fun (not to mention bloody good) guitarist, his boundless

enthusiasm would be annoying, but it's endearing. Hopping from the moody, Satriani-esque licks of *Deja Blues* to the Brian Setzer-nodding swing of *Who's Your Daddy*, he's no one-trick pony. And in an unexpected but joyous turn of events there's a spirited blast through *Hocus Pocus* (when in Rome, or Holland...) with original Focus guitarist Jan Akkerman, who, despite being visibly long in the tooth, can still play.

Quinn Sullivan was taken under blues guitar legend Buddy Guy's wing when he was just eight, and today, still only 18, he's a blues-rock pro who grew up in the Ed Sheeran generation. That might ring some alarm bells, but Sullivan's classy playing and easy stage manner quell any such fears. Besides smooth blues rock there are southern vibes and Allmans-esque keyboards in *Let It Rain*, and pop-edged tunes such as *Midnight Highway*. And he can sing – rather like a young Bryan Adams, cross-bred with John Mayer – although there's room for him to grow into a bolder, wilder prospect.

No such issues for Eric Gales, whose tumultuous past and return from the brink (following guitar-prodigy beginnings, he lost 25 years to drugs and trouble with

the law) have left laceration marks on his playing; his chops are deft yet raw and physically powerful.

Flanked by a mighty three-piece rhythm section, it's like watching Howlin' Wolf in the body of Tupac, with bling and matching hashtagged T-shirts (#BOOM) worn by Gales and his band. The sweetness of Freddie King's *Boogie Man* is offset by the wild, loose heaviness of *Swamp*, drawing old-school blues from the depths of present-day pain.

And alongside his impassioned recollections and gratitude Gales is surprisingly funny – relishing in saying how great it is to be in "Zoetermeer!" and "the Netherlands!" a lot, and complimenting his percussionist/wife's rain stick ("That's pretty bad-ass, y'all...") during Buddy Guy's *Baby Please Don't Leave Me*.

It is largely a covers and improv set, albeit one full of personality, and it's tonight's 'special guest', cowboy-hatted Texan (and Supersonic Blues Machine man) Lance Lopez who brings the songwriter weight with *Mr Lucky* and the charismatic swagger of *Tell The Truth*.

The gig closes with all four guitarists jamming *Red House* and *Going Down*, with Akkerman joining in for the latter. It's a route-one end to a bluesy night, but it definitely works, leaving a very pleasant aftertaste of the smorgasbord we've just been served.

None of these guys is rewriting the book, as such, but all of them deliver with zeal and passion, and can't-help-but-smile moments in each of their sets. The blues can be utterly pedestrian, but it can also be the most joyful, uplifting escape from the everyday.

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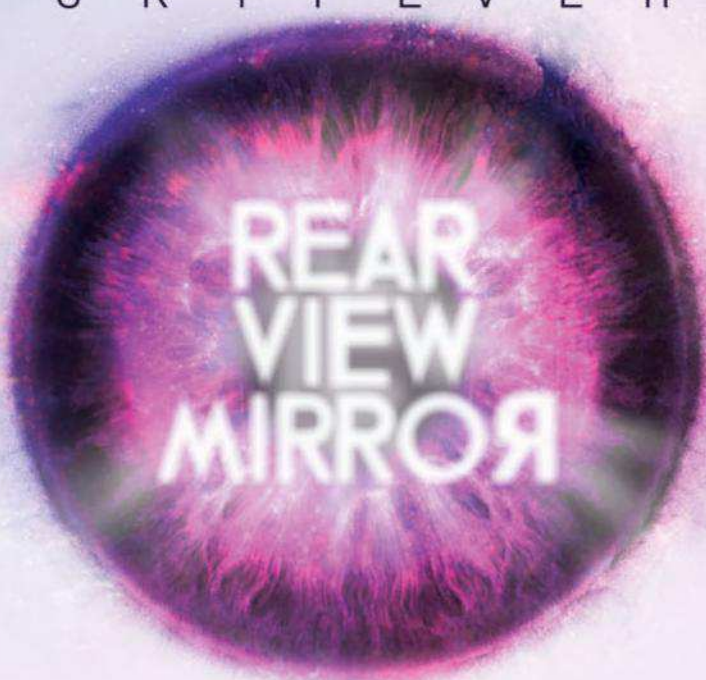
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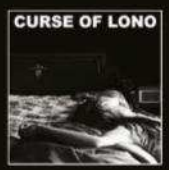
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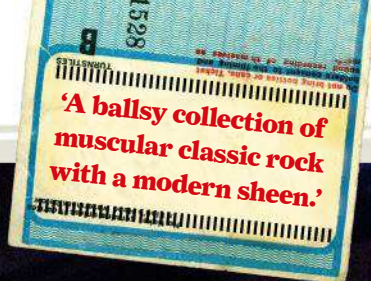
"One of the sleeper hits of the year."

Vive Le Rock



LIVE!

Looking sharp: Alex Veale turns up the Heat.



Tax The Heat

Bristol Rough Trade

Home-town gig displays the band's arena-rocking potential.

★ Sharply dressed in dark suits, paisley pattern shirts and skinny ties, and sporting tidy facial hair, Tax The Heat are not giving off too many rock-star clues in Bristol; the West Country guitar quartet look more like small-claims-court defendants, trainee rabbis or junior Serbian warlords kicking back on their day off.

But appearances can deceive. Rough Trade's compact Bristol venue space is rammed to bursting for this second of two home-town launch parties for Tax The Heat's second album, *Change Your Position*, a ballsy collection of muscular classic rock with a modern sheen and a robust grasp of melody. As the album invites comparison across the spectrum, to bands ranging from Aerosmith to Muse, the White Stripes to Queens Of The Stone Age, I had little idea what to expect in Bristol. Spandex and big hair? Vintage leather and ripped denim? Silver space suits and prog-psych pyrotechnics?

"There is something great about going to see a band and it does kind of catch you off guard," Tax The Heat singer and lead guitarist Alex Veale tells me after the show. "Something you've not seen packaged or performed like that before, but keeping it true to yourselves as well. The interesting thing about this album is everybody says different stuff about it. We've never ever been compared to the same band twice."

Judging by the gushing reviews for both the band's albums so far, backed up by getting support slots with veteran bands such as Terrorvision and Europe, Tax The Heat are clearly striking a power chord with fans, critics and fellow rockers, young and old alike. As they huddle on to the cramped stage at Rough Trade, they radiate the understated confidence of a young band who see a healthy future ahead of them. Plus, somewhat incongruously, two large bowls of flowers behind them.

Bristol is Tax The Heat heartland. Guitarist JP Jacyshyn and bass player Antonio Angotti live in the city, Veale and drummer Jack Taylor about an hour away in the sleepy Somerset town of Frome. Tonight's audience is local and vocal, full of cheering family and rowdy friends. Between songs, one audience member loudly declares his love for the band, tongue only half in cheek. "Take your clothes off, JP!" another shouts. "In a while," Veale fires back, "maybe at the after party..."

The meat of this Bristol show is a full run-through of the *Change Your Position* album, which confirms that Tax The Heat are a fairly straight good-time pop-rock band, but loaded with plenty more potential besides. Gibson Les Paul slung just right? Check. Vintage valve amps fizzing with feedback and cranked to horse-stunning volume? Yup. Dainty floral arrangements placed prominently behind the band? Um... Then let's rock this mother!

The songs on *Change Your Position* cover a broad spectrum of crowd-pleasing styles, from the piledriver grunt-funk of *All That Medicine* to rollicking, careening,



Tax men: a band with multi-faceted arena-rocking potential.

shout-along stampedes like *On The Run*. There are flecks of vintage Americana on the ragged garage-blues gallop *My Headspace*, which casts one eye across the Atlantic with its lyrical nods to New Orleans and Mexico, while *Taking The Hit* adopts a more new-wave line with its hard-angled aesthetic and shredding guitar solo.

So far, so retro. Tax The Heat take their name from a line in the classic Beatles song *Taxman*, and drawing heavily on vintage blues-based rock they're clearly not afraid to flaunt their traditionalist tastes. Indeed their initial concept was to try to recapture some of the raw spirit of classic 1960s bands. But Veale disputes any narrowly nostalgic mission.

"You're going to get that retro comment come up now and then," he says, shrugging. "I don't think there is anything wrong with that on some level, because we are inspired by bands of the past. But it is all about moving forward and bringing life to it."

In fairness, there are also more contemporary elements in Tax The Heat's sound that push beyond the antique guitar-rock pantheon. Stand-out songs in tonight's set include brawny beasts like *Playing With Fire*, which thunders along on a Josh Homme-style base layer of squirmy-worm riffage before erupting into a mighty melodic mud-slide of a chorus. Or *The Last Time*, a churning power ballad which builds

into a starburst of stacked harmonies, glam-metal guitar spangles and apocalyptic lyrics about oceans swallowing the sun. Or *Wearing a Disguise*, another expansive epic that bustles with snaggy hooks.

The album run-through concludes with *Change Your Position* itself. Already a crowd-rousing singalong with its hammering punk-pop momentum, flaming falsetto peaks, raunchy fuzz-metal guitar motifs and slam-dunk chorus refrain, it left my ancient ears ringing with distant echoes of The Knack's *My Sharona*. Which is a Good Thing, obviously.

Having played the whole album, Veale opens up

the show to audience requests. Well, sort of. "Now we become the Tax The Heat jukebox," he says, grinning. "Any song you want from any album ever made, as long as it's from *Fed To The Lions* by Tax The Heat..."

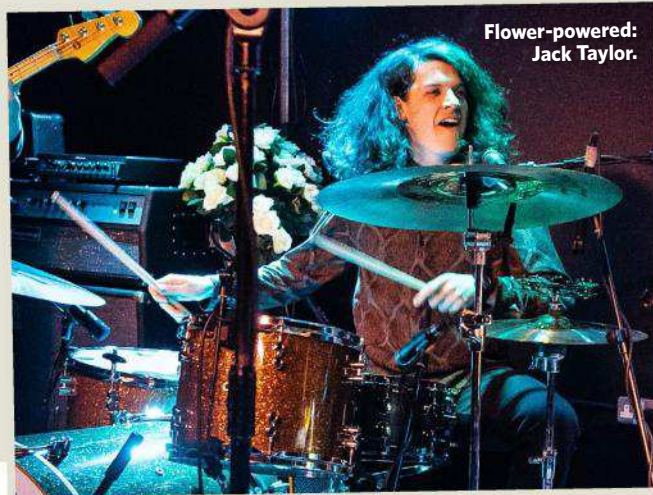
A clutch of songs from the band's first album follow, including a stomping, raucous *Stood On The Platform To Leave*, before they end with *Fed To The Lions* itself, a frenzy of catchy chants, fizzing riffs, triple-speed bass lines and a synchronised headbanging finale. It's a scorcher, and arguably still Tax The Heat's finest three minutes.

Inevitably at a compact live event like this, the band cannot quite replicate the richness of their albums, especially the stylistic range and sonic depth of *Change Your Position*. All the same, this show clearly signals that they have the level of ambition and skill required to transcend their more monochrome retro tendencies. On a bigger stage, with a bigger production, their multi-faceted arena-rocking potential should become clear. Watch this space.

"At the moment you are automatically referred to as a classic rock band or a retro rock band, purely because you've got a Gibson Les Paul around your neck and you're playing through a big valve amp," Veale says after the show. "For us that seems strange. We're just making rock music."

Words: **Stephen Dalton**
Photos: **Kevin Nixon**

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"We are inspired by bands of the past, but it's all about moving forward." Alex Veale



Flower-powered: Jack Taylor.



LIVE!

'The set zooms in, soft-focus, on the songs of passion and devotion.'



The BellRays

London Camden Assembly

Californians give a glimpse of their punk-funk-rock-soul future.

★ BellRays frontwoman Lisa Kekaula raises her hands. "It's Saturday night," she announces. "It's St Patrick's Day, it's a rock show, we all got something to do."

We know our duty. We are to rock out as though our devil horns depend upon it. And few bands are more effective rock ringleaders than California's The BellRays, 28 years and eight albums of "hi-octane rock'n'roll" behind them, and a new dawn ahead.

"Why has it been eight years since the last album [2010's *Black Lightning*]?" muses guitarist Bob Vennun in the Camden Assembly's penthouse dressing room.

His mind flits across almost three decades of BellRays history, leaping between labels (including

a high-profile stint on Alan McGee's Poptones in the early 2000s) on a never-ending mission to embody the soul of America's rock roots. "Quality control," he says eventually. "We did a couple of recordings, listened to it, and it just didn't feel right - it didn't have what we needed in it. We did tours and stuff, and that interrupted things too. Side projects. Some of the side projects were inspired by the fact that we wanted this record to come from somewhere. I think it just needed mileage in order to come from there."

"There were some songs we would play over and over again, like *Bad Reaction*," Kekaula adds. "We just sat down and said: 'Oh, I hear it. I can see it.' It all just flowed right out. *Perfect* did the same thing. We sat

down and said: 'Okay, we've narrowed these hundred and three songs and pieces down to sixty-three, and then of those, twenty-four could possibly be it.' When we got volume one [*Punk Funk Rock Soul Vol.1*] done, we didn't have a record label to put the stuff out on. It wasn't until after volume one was done that we found someone to put out volume two [*Punk Funk Rock Soul Vol.2*], so we were also buying time, I guess."

"It took a while," Vennun says, grinning. "It was a long birth."

So after eight years in which husband and wife Bob and Lisa collaborated on an album as Lisa And The Lips, and Kekaula provided guest vocals for The Stooges' James Williamson, the new BellRays baby emerged, howling a whole new tune.

It arrived in two parts. Last December's *Punk Funk Rock Soul Vol.1* was a four-track EP reintroducing The BellRays' trademark soundclash of vintage R&B, garage punk rock and classic 50s ramalama rock'n'roll.



Two months later came *Punk Funk Rock Soul Vol.2* ("It just seemed to be part of the same idea," Vennun says), the complete full-album package of riot rock, country gospel romance and, in *Bad Reaction*, a tale of the hangover from hell. *'The party was just getting started,'* Kekaula sings over grindhouse country rock riffs, *'someone gave me cocaine for free/I had a handful of pills... mushrooms and PCP and ketamine are the reason I'm here/I'm gonna need another prescription.'*

Cripes. Where was our invite? "It was loosely based on an experience I had with another band, years and years and years ago," Vennun says. "It was some local guys, one of the first bands I was in. A guy had

an incident. It was very *Pulp Fiction*-esque. Before *Pulp Fiction*."

"It featured an adrenaline shot," Kekaula nods. "Briefly, the guitar player I was playing with was a heroin addict, and he had an episode where we had a gig and he didn't show up, and we didn't know where he was," Vennun explains. "Someone told us he was at his house. So we drove to the house. When we got there, there was an ambulance just pulling up and the paramedics rushed in. When I walk in he's on the floor and his lips are blue and pale. I thought he was dead. Everybody thought he was dead. He was. They tried to bring him around and finally they gave him the adrenalin shot and he woke back up. One of the first things he said was, 'Where's my beer?' and, 'Why is everybody staring at me?'"

It's a bold, ballsy comeback, the perfect anti-party tune to open both the album and tonight's rock'n'roll fire-walk of a gig. Prowling the stage armed with the sardonic sneer and lung-bursting bellow of a truckstop Aretha, Kekaula piles into this child of the Villa Nellcôte like her veins are full of junk and her heart full of adrenalin. *'Doctor, doctor, please! Give me something for this bad reaction,'* she bawls like

“Music isn’t about reliving what you once heard. You change, relationships change.”

a Pentecostal acid queen, and the Assembly revels in her hard rockin' morning-after jitters.

Their congregation is expected to believe. Over 90 minutes and 19 songs, The BellRays play the entire new album, and throw the EP in for free. “The last thing they heard was *Black Lightning* eight years ago, so they’re expecting that, then we give them all this other stuff,” Vennun smirks backstage. “It’s really cool to put together a whole other set. We’ve been playing the same one for seven or eight years. Reorganising it and doing other stuff, it’s completely representative of where we are right now.

"Without blowing my own horn, I think it's a really strong piece," he continues. "It just doesn't race through everything, it dips and it rises, it pauses and it stretches. It does different things. It's like a conversation, it's like hanging out at a bar. Sometimes the conversation's really quiet, sometimes it rages."

Tonight it barges into the bar raging. *Bad Reaction* gives way to the EP's *Mine All Mine*, essentially Tina Turner wired up to the garage-rock grid. Then a Wall Of Sound backbeat and Vennun's space-age licks power up *I Can't Hide*, a euphoric prom-night power ballad about, it seems, giving in to a stalker.

There's a desperation – narcotic or romantic – to these early tunes that gives way to the touch of world-weariness you might expect from barroom rockers approaching their third decade. Through the sophisticated Dusty rock of *I Don't Wanna Cry*, Kekaula waggles a tambourine with the raised eyebrows of a brothel madam at chucking out time, and the sleaze ramps up for *Every Chance I Get*, Kekaula drawling, 'Every chance I get I'm gonna tell you that I love you,' as Vennun spills out gorgeously drunken blues riffs. It sounds like his guitar is crawling through whiskey-soaked sawdust to reach a devoted lover.

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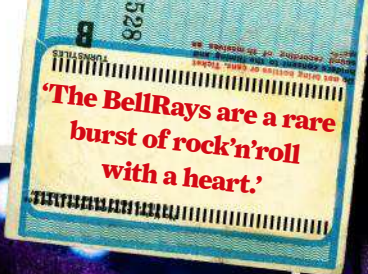
Only after Vennun has taken the mic for the EP's Stonesy centrepiece *Soul Girl* do The BellRays venture into their back catalogue. And even then, they don't venture far. They spend ten minutes revisiting *Black Lightning*,

punching the air through the road-hog rock'n'soul of *Everybody Get Up and Power To Burn* – a kind of *Clashbush City Limits* – and during *Living A Lie*, they do a fair impression of Alabama Shakes self-combusting.



LIVE!

On stage Lisa Kekaula is a force of nature.



California screaming: the band rip through their new material.

Their deepest cut is barely a scratch, dipping back to just 2008 for *Infection*. *Punk Funk Rock Soul* clearly marks a new beginning – there's too much fun to be had in The BellRays' present for them to spend any more time in the past.

Assist Justin Andres takes centre stage for *Junior High*, and the fact he makes it sound like a *School Of Rock* song auditioning to be in *The Rocky Horror Show* only serves to emphasise what makes The BellRays unique. Kekaula's spiritual charisma combines with the in-band romantic bond to make them a rare burst of rock'n'roll with a heart.

Vennun and Kekaula share a mic for *Shake Your Snake* – a dance, not a euphemism, it thankfully transpires – and the second half of the set zooms in, soft focus, on the songs of passion and devotion that are the bedrock of the new album. *Perfect*, with its languid power chords and *The In Crowd* solo, could be an AC/DC song directed by Richard Curtis ('*Perfect in that moment/Now I'm standing next to you and I'm perfect too*').

The couple gaze adoringly into each other's eyes as Kekaula coos the stripped-down opening of *Brand New Day* – '*No more clouds today/You blew them all away*' – the emotion of the moment only slightly marred by Kekaula stopping to berate some talkers at the back.

"The deepest message is that even though it's a rock show, it's all about love," Kekaula tells the crowd ahead of the anthemic soul of *Love And Hard Times* that closes the main set.

"There is a fair amount of wedded bliss, I guess," Vennun says of the album

backstage. "A lot of songs on there are very positive in their thinking. You know, you can write songs complaining about stuff – I used to do that and it just gets old after a while. You start to realise, nobody wants to hear people complain all the time, you know? It's no fun complaining all the time. I'd rather write about bright stuff and be happy."

The hard times the song insists love will see us through, though, might they be Trumpian in outlook? "To me it totally means both of those things," Kekaula nods, "because these are hard times. I don't mean that these are hard times between me and Bob – these are hard times in the world. These are the times when people are making decisions that people are going to have to live with for the rest of their lives. Some of them don't even realise what they're making that decision about – the magnitude of their choice hasn't really hit them. We see this a lot in the States.

"I'm not saying that's what Bob wrote it about but when I'm singing it, I'm definitely singing about what I'm seeing. The overriding message is that it doesn't really matter what the hard times are, as long as you have a positive outlook and love. As long as you're strong, it doesn't matter."

What's your take on the way things are going in America? "Everything about it is completely awful, other than the fact that it's rallying people to realise that this is completely awful," Vennun says. "Everything is collapsing completely. It's almost as bad as I can imagine."

"This might be the time that America actually gets to grow up and deal with all the shit that gets spewed up," Kekaula adds. "I think there's a lot of people that don't realise how close they are to being the same thing as a Nazi following by being on the side of someone like Trump. So without really wanting to mention his name, I try to wake up every day and not really discuss that embarrassment, not only to us as Americans but to the civilised world.

"I think America has been able to escape a lot of that over the years, not having to deal with the really dirty hard work of when you do something wrong, really having to say, 'I'm sorry, this was bad. This was wrong. The way we did those things didn't work.' I don't think this is going to be one of those times."

Out on stage, The BellRays power to the finish. *Man Enough* sounds like the #MeToo movement getting its hands on Led Zeppelin: '*This is zero tolerance I'm feeling!*' Kekaula bellows over flaming Plant riffs. *Now hammers* along on a sultry *Tomorrow Never Knows* beat and Arabian strains. It all ends with Vennun submitting to cries to play some old songs, declaring, "Here's a song I wrote in nineteen fifty-five," and piling into a wild, freak-out *Johnny B Goode*.

"They want you to still be that band they heard the first time," Vennun says as The BellRays charge back to the dressing room and steel themselves for the

drive to Paris. "So it's nice to know if some of them come and they're like, 'Oh, you played all new songs? We don't know any of those tunes, but we like what we heard.' Because to me that's what music is about – it's not about reliving what you once heard. You change, relationships change, life changes."

And how do The BellRays keep the passion burning for nigh on 30 years, through the storms and the silences, the breaks and the breakdowns, the love and the hard times? "Everyone's allowed to quit," Kekaula says. "Once each a day."

And the beast heads east, blowing up a tempest. The BellRays: shining on.

Words: **Mark Beaumont**
Photos: **Will Ireland**



Myles Kennedy

London Islington Assembly Hall

Alter Bridge frontman delivers in the face of adversity.

★ We're greeted tonight by a slightly anxious-looking Myles Kennedy. Sucking on a Strep-sil, the Alter Bridge frontman explains he's a tad "under the weather", having been in self-imposed isolation for the last two days to save his voice.

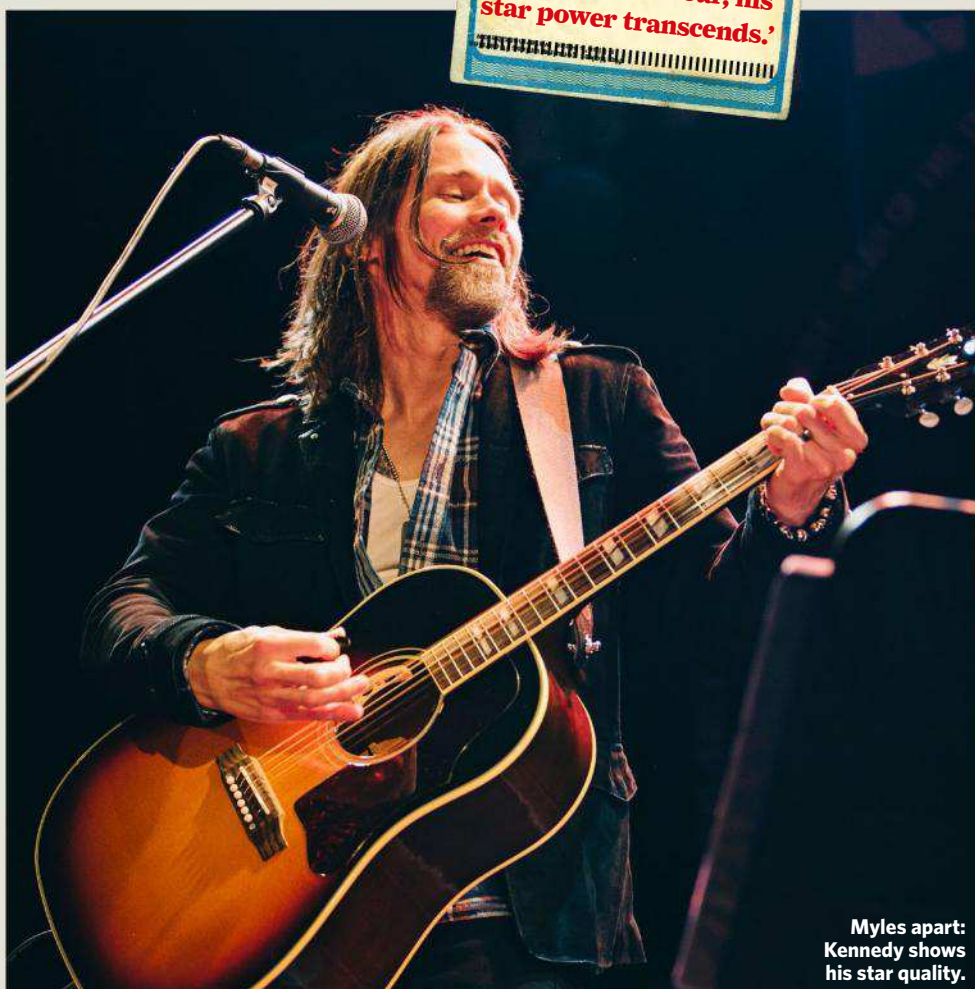
It's a concern, as the stage arrangement doesn't lend itself to laryngitis. Dressed with just candles, Kennedy and his guitars, it's been designed to strip the music back to the bone and show off his exquisite vocal range. There's nowhere to hide, but ever the meticulous professional, Kennedy still manages to pull it out of the bag.

During a career-spanning set that delves into the catalogues of the Mayfield Four, Alter Bridge and his material with Slash, the crowd take over the choruses of *Rise Today* and a jaunty, countrified version of Iron Maiden's *The Trooper*. However, when Kennedy does let that golden timbre soar free on the Jeff Buckley-like *Lover* or *Watch Over You*, his star power transcends.

The sparse set-up also complements the emotional and sonic vulnerabilities of Kennedy's blues-based solo debut album, *Year Of The Tiger*, written about the death of his father. Especially affecting is the rendition of *Love Can Only Heal*, which holds the spellbound audience in captivated silence.

Despite Kennedy's worries, this is a classy night with one of rock's classiest performers.

Dannii Leivers



Myles apart: Kennedy shows his star quality.

Bruce Springsteen

New York City Walter Kerr Theatre

Springsteen on Broadway.

★ The bar closes, the toilets are cleared and the bell rings before Springsteen nonchalantly walks onstage, dressed in black and gripping his acoustic. "I come from a boardwalk town where almost everything is tinged with fraud."

He includes himself in that description, enchanting the audience by lifting the veil on what most keep hidden. *Growin' Up* and *My Hometown* have a spontaneous feel, despite the obvious discipline involved in creating this intense piece of theatre. He evokes a vivid picture of 1950s working-class Catholic life by referring to a daily procession of weddings and funerals, as well as the community that shaped him.

The light and shade of his mother and father are beautifully weaved around *The Wish* and a haunting *My Father's House*. The level of connection runs deeper than anything he's done before.

Born In The USA is hammered out and stripped down to something more brutal and restless. During the piano-led *Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out*, a short silence marks out a tribute to the E Street Band's Clarence Clemons. Springsteen's wife Patti features on *Brilliant Disguise* and their voices ache together, bringing a compelling sense of drama. *Dancing In The Dark* then comes close to Springsteen's more typical live energy.

After *Born To Run*, he points, waves and takes a final bow. "I hope I've been a good travelling companion," he said late in the show. Of that there is no doubt.

Richard Purden

John Cale

London Barbican

Ex-Velvet celebrates his 76th birthday in familiarly combative style.

★ The opening of a two-night 'Futurespective' of his career predictably finds John Cale with little appetite for nostalgia. Instead he starts with 2003's obscure *Over Her Head*, a chilly song about a broken female psyche, which collides with back-projected topless women from some 60s porn mag or happening. A still less familiar EP track, *E Is Missing*, is soon being stretched to within an inch of its life, and it's clear that Cale has no intention of starting to compromise now.

He's turned up mob-handed, with guests including the London Contemporary Orchestra and Welsh compatriot Cate Le Bon, although they're underemployed. The orchestra at least comes in handy when Cale's wistfully beautiful 70s ballads soften the mood, starting with *Big White Cloud* from his solo debut *Vintage Violence*, and a lone pick from *Paris 1919*, *Half Past France*.

The next night will see a dose of his savage 70s with the likes of *Fear Is a Man's Best Friend* and *Pablo Picasso*. We get a stonily mournful *Hedda Gabler*, and a pounding assault on The Velvet's *I'm Waiting For The Man*. "Shut up! Shut the fuck up!" Cale the punk avatar screams at its climax.

Rather more politely, the crowd sing *Happy Birthday*. It brings a flashing smile to the face of this 76-year-old, as he powers full steam ahead into the good night.

Nick Hasted

The Dead Daisies, The Treatment, The Amorettes

London Camden Koko

The power of three.

★ Even as early as 7.30pm, around 400 punters press stageward. It's been 18 months since Scots band The Amorettes played in Camden - on that occasion above a pub - and since then it's clear that word has got around. Coming on stage to Slade's *We'll Bring The House Down*, they then get in everyone's faces with a 30-minute set bristling with power, attitude and early-AC/DC swagger. Their trajectory is clearly upward, bill-topping to follow.

Cambridge five-piece The Treatment are breaking in new singer Tom Rampton, but you'd never guess. He looks born to prowl between the guitars, grins and chest tattoos of Tagore and Tao Grey. This band too channel AC/DC - although a bit further on in the catalogue - and have the nous to run many songs together, creating a set oozing confidence over originality.

For an hour - up to the point when they murder the Stones' *Bitch* - The Dead Daisies are doing great. Frontman John Corabi has the audience in the palm of his hand and (*Bitch* aside) even playing half of the new album is working well. But eventually their patchwork quilt of classic-rock steals runs out of steam and the five-piece get lazy, delivering snippets of Lizzy, Purple, Aerosmith, Zeppelin and Kiss before bludgeoning The Beatles' *Helter Skelter* as their final song. Ironical, then, that they'd peaked on *Long Way To Go* - the best song that none of their heroes got around to writing.

Neil Jeffries

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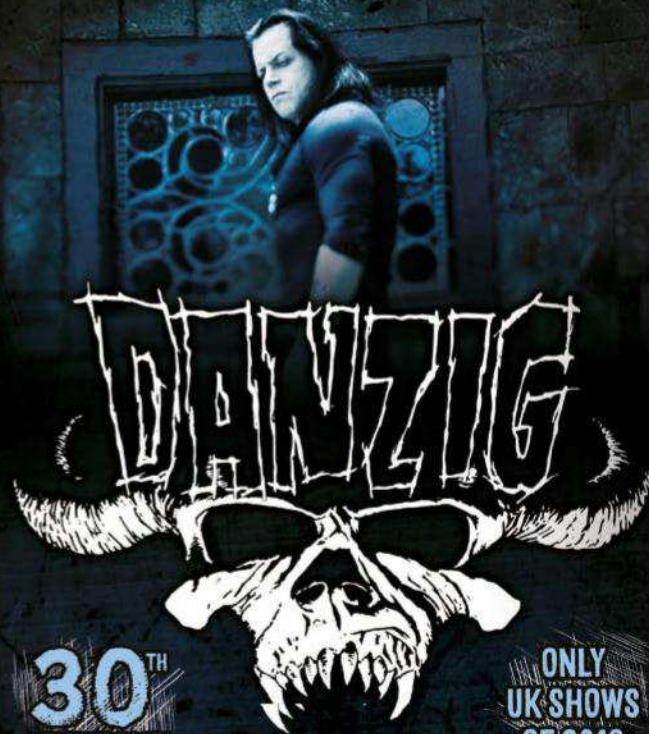
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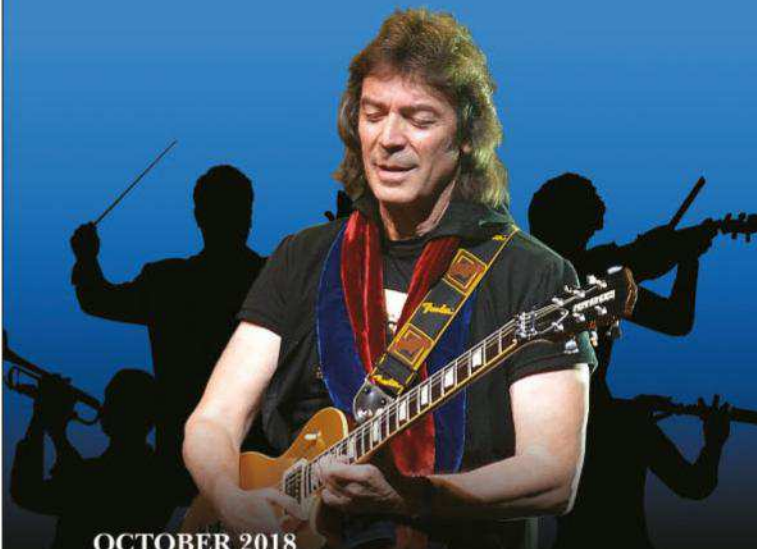


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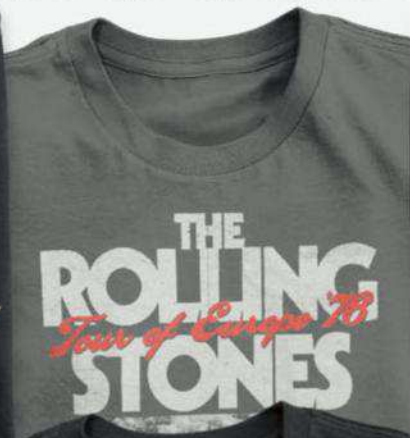
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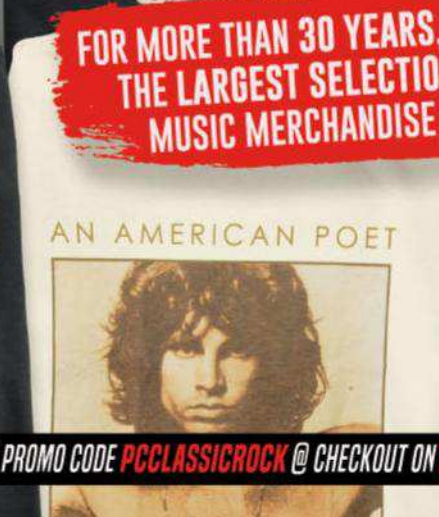
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Heavy Load

Heavy questions for heavy rockers

Veteran sideman guitarist and solo artist **Nils Lofgren** on back-flips, culinary skills, crying, sugar and more sugar.

Interview: **Paul Rees**

One of rock's great sidemen, Nils Lofgren joined Neil Young's band at just 18, adding his blazing guitar to Young's seminal *After The Gold Rush* album and also playing on his bleak masterpiece *Tonight's The Night*. Since then, Lofgren has backed stars including Willie Nelson, Jerry Lee Lewis, Ringo Starr and, most enduringly, Bruce Springsteen, joining the E Street Band just before the all-conquering *Born In the USA* tour. He's now well into

his fourth decade at the Boss's right hand.

Since forming Grin in 1968, Lofgren has also enjoyed a parallel and ongoing career as a band leader and singer-songwriter. In Grin he employed his unique onstage trick of doing a backflip off a trampoline while playing a guitar solo – and for which he somehow has no serious injuries to report.

Today he's at home in Arizona. It's here that he shot his latest project, *Blind Date Jam*, with friend and pedal-steel wizard Mike Smith, the pair of them going at it in Lofgren's garage. The baking Arizona sun is not long up and he's just back from walking his three dogs.

Which was the first song you figured out how to play?

I was six years old and it was on an accordion. It was *Santa Lucia*, an Italian ballad. I very quickly started to learn those old country songs from my grandmothers, who were Italian and Swedish.

How's your Italian cooking?

Oh, I'm terrible. I'm married to an incredible professional cook, Amy. Thank God she cooks for us. But I have got to the point now that I can butter a piece of toast without burning it, and boil water for tea. That's the extent of what I'm able to do in the kitchen.

What's the first piece of advice Neil Young gave you?

Prior to recording *After The Gold Rush* with Neil, when I was seventeen my band Grin moved from Chicago to LA and I was living in Topanga Canyon with David Briggs, Neil's producer. David was kind of my big brother and mentor, so I was around those guys a lot. I had a year of hanging out with Neil and David and just getting to know them. Mainly, they instilled their work ethic and passion about music. That was invaluable to me at a very early age. To this day they were the two biggest influences on me.

When did you first pull off the trampoline trick on stage?

It was in Tampa, Florida and Grin was on a tour opening for the J Geils Band. I was kind of a shy, introverted guy, and I had watched the whole energy and physical performance of those guys and thought: "What can I do that

is visual but not fake?" I was a gymnast in junior high, and I got the idea that my old coach could teach me how to do a backflip off a mini-tramp with a guitar. I could already do a backflip, but once you put a guitar on, you have to relearn the stunt. He taught me how to do it using ceiling belts and a rope.

In Tampa, we played to thousands of college kids and for a half-hour they booed us and threw bottles at us. At the end of our set I did my first flip and they just went crazy. Welcome to show business.



What is your unsung claim to fame?

I'm the only guitarist in history who's played with Cab Calloway and Bart Simpson. A friend of mine at Fox wanted to do a couple of Christmas jingles for *The Simpsons* one time, and the obvious thing was to have a rock version with me as the straight guy and Bart as the wild man playing Jimi Hendrix licks around me.

What's the perfect guitar riff?

I wouldn't use the word 'perfect', but some of the guys I would like to have walk in front of me and play are Hendrix, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, Albert King, BB King, Roy Buchanan, Tommy Emmanuel, people that become one with the instrument and their soul goes way past any technical prowess.

When was the last time you cried?

I've had a few bouts since we lost our dear old dog, Groucho, at Christmas. I tend to well up pretty easily.

Do you believe in God?

I do. And I believe there's an afterlife. I'm hoping that I'll see my dad again and our dogs that have passed. I just don't like organised religion at all. I'm a recovering Catholic.

What's your favourite indulgence?

It used to be a lot of hard liquor, but I've been clean and sober for thirty years. Now I'm a sugar and caffeine junkie. And I know it's not good for me – I'm sixty-six. At half-time during a football game on TV, I might get a pint of Haagen-Dazs Swiss Vanilla-Almond, put the whole pint in a bowl and sprinkle a bag

of chocolate pecans over it. Then I get some white chocolate and dice it up and dump that all over it. Then I sprinkle it with a little coconut, and throw in a few shots of skimmed milk so it will be non-fat.

What will be written on your tombstone?

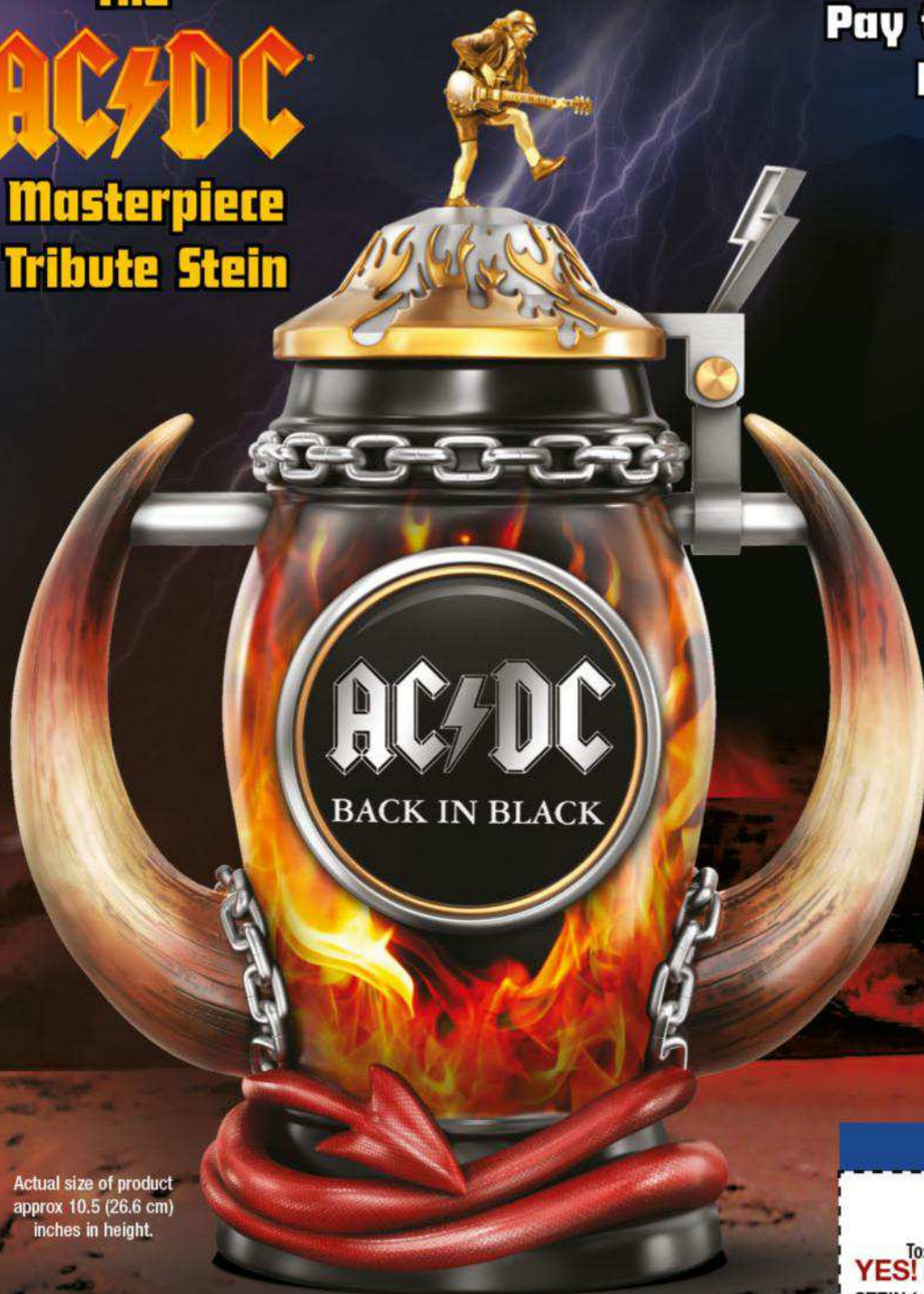
That's too ominous of a question for me to even go there right now. ☹

*Nils Lofgren tours the UK in May. *Blind Date Jam* is available now to download from nilslofgren.com.*

Cheers to Classic Rock 'n' Roll!

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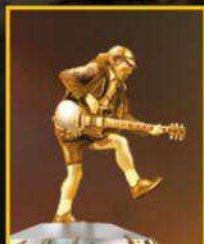
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